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# Writing Transfer and Teaching for Transfer: Annotated Bibliography

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## Annotated Bibliography Introduction

Motivated by my interest in the related conversations about promoting writing transfer and teaching for transfer<sup>1</sup>, I have brought together this collection of sources to help answer this research question: **As educators how can we design writing programs, courses, and assignments that foster the application of writing knowledge and practice across contexts by our students?** Many of the sources in this collection represent scholarship that addresses the extent to which—and in what conditions—learners transfer their writing knowledge and practice from one context to another. Some authors whose work appears in this collection propose broader changes at the institutional or curricular level, while others focus on changes to individual courses or writing assignments. Other sources deal with a related interest—the use of digital portfolios as tools that can enable individuals to showcase, reflect on, and apply their learning. A common thread among the sources in this collection is that they all offer insights into ways to (re)design our programs, courses, and assignments to increase the likelihood of our students making important connections as writers who negotiate a variety of contexts within and outside of the classroom. I hope you find this annotated bibliography—a work-in-progress which I continue to develop as new scholarship is published—a useful resource in thinking about how promote the transfer of learning by students in your courses.

Ted Rollins, Professor of English

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<sup>1</sup> Some argue that teaching for transfer is not possible because each context is unique, but other scholars believe there are approaches for teaching for transfer that can work. In “Teaching for Transfer,” David N. Perkins and Gavriel Salomon explain, “The implicit assumption in education has been that transfer takes care of itself,” but “considerable research and everyday experience testify that this Bo Peep theory [the notion that knowledge or skills learned in one context will automatically transfer to another context] is inordinately optimistic” (23). They acknowledge the skeptical view that, as some cognitive psychologists have argued, “there may not be as much to transfer as we think” because “Skill and knowledge are perhaps more specialized [or context-specific] than they look” (24). However, Perkins and Salomon contend that we can teach for transfer. In the article they present two strategies: “hugging” refers to teaching in ways that help students see the more overt connections between two contexts or tasks required for low road transfer, while “bridging” refers to teaching in ways that help students engage in the mindful abstraction necessary to achieve high road transfer (28). According to the authors, “bridging and hugging together could do much to foster transfer in instructional settings” (29). If our goal is to teach for transfer, Anne Beaufort explains in *College Writing and Beyond*, we must find out what is common across our disciplinary areas of focus. “While writing expertise does not transfer wholesale from one writing context to another,” she explains, “it is possible to identify the common knowledge domains within which writers must develop context-specific knowledge” that can enable “teaching for transfer” (17). The 2015 *Elon Statement on Writing Transfer*, composed by researchers from two-year and four-year institutions, acknowledges that existing research “highlights the challenges of teaching to facilitate transfer” but also emphasizes the research “suggests that there are things that teachers can do to afford learning in these moments of challenge” or transition such as when students move from writing their first-year writing course to their other courses.

## Writing Transfer and Teaching for Transfer Annotated Bibliography

**Research Question:** How can we design writing programs, courses, and assignments that foster the application of writing knowledge/skills/practice across contexts by our students?

Adler-Kassner, Linda, John Majewski, and Damian Koshnick. "The Value of Troublesome Knowledge: Transfer and Threshold Concepts in Writing and History." *Composition Forum*, no. 26, Fall 2012. <http://compositionforum.com/issue/26>. Accessed 1 Sept. 2017.

In this article directed to compositionists, Adler-Kassner, Majewski, and Koshnick use threshold concepts such as genre as a framework for exploring student transfer of learning in general education courses. In the view of the co-authors, "threshold concepts may provide a productive frame for faculty to productively engage with questions about the purposes of [general education] and to consider how to support students as they work to achieve these purposes." Research for their study focused on college students currently enrolled in two general education courses—Writing and History—using surveys, focus groups, and interviews to collect data. After offering examples from teachers and students in both courses, the co-authors present their conclusions about the relationship among threshold concepts, first-year composition, and general education. "[Threshold] concepts that accrue *across* learning contexts . . . need to be reinforced even more strongly in multiple classroom settings by students *and* instructors," they emphasize. If teachers can integrate relevant threshold concepts into our teaching in transparent and effective ways, the co-authors propose, we "can help students to explicitly, consciously enact these shared threshold concepts, facilitating more effective transfer across" the various contexts in which they write.

The co-authors make important connections between threshold concepts and the transfer of learning. In the "Threshold Concepts in Writing and History" section, the authors provide helpful examples of threshold concepts—audience, purpose, genre, and discourse—that apply to both disciplines. Their finding that students tend to "[describe] writing as a set of rules to be followed, rather than as an activity situated in and growing out of context" poses a

key challenge for all writing teachers. How do we get students to understand and practice writing as a dynamic activity? Teaching students to see how writing in one discipline relates to and is distinct from writing in another discipline, as the authors suggest, seems to be part of the answer. Adler-Kassner, Majewski, and Koshnick present research findings from the University of California at Santa Barbara that offer a model of how to conduct research involving students who are concurrently enrolled in two or more courses to see how they may apply previous or current knowledge across contexts.

Baird, Neil, and Bradley Dilger. "How Students Perceive Transitions: Dispositions and Transfer in Internships." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 68, no. 4, 2017, pp. 684-712.

This article uses a longitudinal study focusing on two students "to increase attention to internships and similar work-to-learn experiences in the lively conversations about writing transfer" (685), Baird and Dilger explain. Their study addresses "how both students and faculty conceptualize transfer, recognizing that tremendous effects often result" (687). Baird and Dilger, elaborating on the work of Dana Driscoll and Jennifer Wells, suggest that "ease and ownership . . . may function as dispositions" (689). Based on analysis of interviews with students and their instructors, Baird's and Dilger's study was conducted at Western Illinois University. The authors present recommendations based on their findings. First, "as we consider ways to support positive disposition changes in our students," they write, "we believe future research must also investigate the interactions between dispositions as well" (707). Furthermore, when considering the implications of their study, the authors argue that those who shape writing programs "[should recognize] that classroom practices remain critical for transfer in work-to-learn experiences" and "should seek to design work-to-learn experiences in a manner that acknowledges a range of prior experiences and a diversity of dispositions" (707-709). The authors believe those who have a stake in writing programs need to make curricular decisions that promote rather than frustrate transfer through work-to-learn experiences such as internships, practicums, and apprenticeships with special attention to student dispositions.

As university English professors who have been studying writing transfer since 2010, Baird and Dilger not only bring to attention the role of work-to-learn experiences in promoting the transfer of learning but also help to introduce new terms. For instance, they discuss two new terms related to dispositions. According to the co-authors, “ease is a cluster of habits of mind and cultural forces that shape approaches to the complexities and difficulties of all technologies, including writing” (689), while “[o]wnership . . . is the extent to which writers invest in, identify with, and seek to maintain control of their writing” (690). Reading about the first student’s (Mitchell’s) experience shows why ownership is important. When Mitchell began to perceive his writing for a music course related to his music therapy major as “just as an assignment” he became less invested in what he was writing and settled for lower grades that were the result of procrastination. By contrast, reading about the second student’s (Ford’s) experience illustrates the value of [a] requiring some form of work-to-learn experience related to the student’s major and [b] having students write in authentic ways (such as Ford writing reports crime scenes) as professionals do rather than write what they perceive as school assignments. Perhaps the most important point the authors make relates to the value of curriculum-level revisions: “writing curricula should include more opportunities to network with professionals and take up professional identities, both in and outside of classrooms” (710). What form(s) should these networking opportunities take? How can writing instructors successfully integrate such opportunities into their courses? Should some form of work-to-learn experience be required in first-year composition? At the very least, Baird’s and Dilger’s study offers evidence that writing-on-the-job (through an internship or apprenticeship) can help to provide the authentic situations students need to motivate them to learn as well as apply their learning.

Beach, King. “Consequential Transitions: A Sociocultural Expedition Beyond Transfer in Education.” *Review of Research in Education*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1999, 101-139.

Beach challenges the “transfer” metaphor and proposes alternative concepts. His article’s purpose, Beach explains, is “to move beyond the transfer metaphor in understanding how we experience continuity and transformation in becoming someone or something new . . .

and how [what he calls] consequential transitions may become a macrocosm of how we learn new tasks and problems” (101-102). Thinking of transfer in terms of generalization and transformation, Beach suggests, is important if our goal is to understand how people apply what they learn as well as how they change through learning. “The construct of consequential transition,” Beach writes, is intended “as a tool for understanding and facilitating this phenomenon of generalization” which he argues is “highly contextualized, involves multiple processes rather than a single procedure, includes changing social organizations as well as individuals, and reflects some notion of progress” (130). Creating and sharing artifacts related to how they generate their own solutions to problems they face, Beach suggests, can help learners undergo transformation.

Beach’s emphasis on “unintentional generalization” is important because, as he makes clear, “transfer most frequently occurs without anyone thinking about how to apply prior learning or reason by analogy on a new problem or situation” (111). As learners we generalize naturally. This statement helps me to understand Beach’s proposal to move from the concept of “transfer” to the concept of “consequential transitions”; he writes, “Transitions are consequential when they are consciously reflected on, often struggled with, and the eventual outcome changes one’s sense of self and social positioning” (114). This concept relates to moving from “novice” to “expert”—such as when a student interested in becoming a teacher sees herself as someone who is becoming an “insider” rather than remaining an “outsider.” Here are some key questions Beach raises: How does the “transfer” metaphor limit and even side-track our efforts to find out how to promote learning across contexts? If we agree that we need a new metaphor or construct (such as “consequential transitions”), what types of “consequential transitions” should we support or encourage as educators?

Bean, John. “Using Writing to Promote Thinking.” *Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*, Jossey Bass, 2011, pp. 1-12.

Because “the use of writing and critical thinking activities to promote learning does not happen through serendipity,” Bean contends, as teachers we “must plan for it and foster it

throughout” our courses (1). The first step he offers for the integration of writing and related critical thinking activities is to develop an understanding of basic principles involving the relationship between writing, learning, and critical thinking. According to Bean, “writing is both a process of doing critical thinking and a product communicating the results of critical thinking,” and therefore writing must be taught as more than “a ‘communication skill’” (3). His second step for teachers is to keep critical thinking objectives in mind while planning a course. Moving into the next step, Bean writes that “A crucial [third] step in teaching critical thinking is to develop good problems for students to think about,” with teachers ideally framing problems as questions that “require both subject matter knowledge and critical thinking” (5) of their students. Bean’s fourth step involves finding different ways to present critical thinking problems or questions to students. These ways include presenting problems “as formal writing assignments,” “as thought-provokers for exploratory writing,” “as tasks for small group problem solving,” “as starters for inquiry-based class discussions,” “as think-on-your feet questions,” “as focusing questions,” and “as practice exam questions” (6-7). The fifth step involves the development of strategies that make exploratory writing and talking part of the course. “To deepen students’ thinking,” Bean argues, “teachers need to build into their courses time, space, tools, and motivation for exploratory thinking” (7-8). The next-to-last step involves strategy development for coaching students to become effective critical thinkers by modeling good critical thinking and offering critiques of solutions or answers to problems students present. Bean’s seventh and final step is to “structure our courses to promote writing as a process” (8) and discourage students from procrastinating. Finally, the author responds to what he believes are the most common misconceptions that may discourage teachers from integrating writing and critical thinking activities into their courses. Among these misconceptions are the notions that doing so will [a] reduce the amount of time teachers can spend on course content, [b] be inappropriate in some courses that do not require or involve “writing,” [c] overwhelm the teacher in grading papers, and [d] be difficult for teachers who lack adequate writing knowledge about grammar or composition theory.

Bean makes a connection to what is transferable across disciplines when he suggests that while “the mental habits that allow [students] to experience problems phenomenologically

. . . are discipline-specific, since each discipline poses its own kinds of problems and conducts inquiries, uses data, and makes arguments in its own characteristic fashion,” it is also true that “some aspects of critical thinking are also generic across all disciplines” (3). Likewise, in responding to the concern that integrating writing and critical thinking into a course takes away time for course content, Bean addresses the transfer of learning. He writes, “Critical thinking tasks—which require students to *use* their expanding knowledge of subject matter to address disciplinary problems—motivate better study habits by helping students see their learning as purposeful and interesting” (9). Critical thinking is integral to the transfer of learning, I believe, because it requires us to seek connections and find answers or solutions to problems. While this chapter from Bean’s book does not explicitly focus on teaching for transfer, it is useful in terms of presenting concepts—based on his decades of experience as an English professor—involving how to promote learning in composition courses and in courses across the curriculum.

Beaufort, Anne. *College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction*, Utah State UP, 2007.

In this book Beaufort is writing to make “a case for a reconceptualization of writing instruction at the post-secondary level” (5). Rather than abandon the enterprise of first-year writing instruction at the college level, Beaufort proposes an alternative approach: “Freshman writing, if taught with an eye toward transfer of learning and with explicit acknowledgement of the context of freshman writing itself as a social practice, can set students on a course of life-long learning so that they know *how to learn* to become better and better writers in a variety of social contexts” (7). Teachers should make clear to students the discourse communities in which their first-year composition courses are situated, Beaufort contends, in order to help students see how different contexts shape the values and expectations for different kinds of writing. “While writing expertise does not transfer wholesale from one writing context to another,” the author states, “it is possible to identify the common knowledge domains within which writers must develop context-specific knowledge” that can enable “teaching for transfer” (17). She defines five knowledge domains. They relate to discourse community (the broadest knowledge domain), subject matter, genre, rhetoric, and writing process. Beaufort



offers “a single case study . . . in the hope of inviting teachers and researchers to give some pause and thought to their assumptions and practices” (27) related to first-year composition. Chapters 2-5 explore the experience of one student, Tim, as a writer in composition as well as in history and engineering. The book concludes with three recommendations. First, Beaufort argues that any model for understanding a writer’s growth should take into account the five knowledge domains she has defined. Second, she claims that no matter their discipline teachers need to know and use approaches that promote the transfer of learning. Third, those serving in administrative roles should give faculty members opportunities to develop an effective sequence to promote the transfer of learning within and beyond individual courses across the curriculum.

Beaufort’s idea of changing the focus from generic writing skills to the ability to learn in different contexts fits with my concept of the learning e-portfolio, which is going to require students to not only document their learning but also reflect on what they know about how they learn new knowledge, skills, and practices. Reflecting on her research leads me to ask these questions about how to teach writing more effectively: Given that many students (like Tim in Beaufort’s study) struggle “to grasp the ‘real’ social context for writing in [academic] disciplines, beyond the context of ‘doing school’” (144), how can I create—and help students recognize—authentic writing situations through assignments that are meaningful beyond the writing classroom? How can I help students “abstract principles that can be applied to new situations,” provide “numerous opportunities to apply abstract concepts in different contexts,” and encourage “the practice of mindfulness, or meta-cognition” (151-152)? As a professor with expertise in ethnographic research and writing across the curriculum, Beaufort effectively raises these questions related to the transfer of learning and identifies knowledge domains that educators must consider when teaching for transfer.

Bergmann, Linda S., and Janet Zepernick. “Disciplinary and Transfer: Students’ Perceptions of Learning to Write.” *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 31, no. 1-2, 2007, pp. 124-149.

In response to their students' belief that what they learned in first-year composition was not applicable to disciplinary writing, Bergmann and Zepernick conducted research to investigate students' perceptions of learning to write. They used focus groups to get a sense of how students perceive "how and where they learned to write and, most of all, what students believe themselves to be learning—what knowledge or skills they understood themselves to have acquired as thinkers and writers" (126). Students' "preconceptions about writing and what it means to learn to write," they found, "limit students' ability to recognize, understand, or, finally, make use of most of the skills that composition teachers are trying to teach" (128). More specifically, those preconceptions included the notions that writing for English or composition courses [1] was non-academic or non-professional, as opposed to their writing in courses related to their discipline, [2] was too subjective in relation to disciplinary writing, and [3] was generally not applicable to writing in other courses (129). "The attitudes expressed by our respondents," Bergmann and Zepernick conclude, "suggest that the primary obstacle to such transfer is not that students are *unable* to recognize situations outside [first-year composition] in which those skills can be used, but that students *do not look for* such situations because they believe that skills learned in [first-year composition] have no value in any other setting" (139). A solution Bergmann and Zepernick offer is to revise first-year composition so that it focuses on how students learn to write by making decisions based on their understanding of different rhetorical contexts and discourse communities.

Their research conducted at the University of Missouri-Rolla is applicable to the question of how to promote learning transfer from course to course within and across disciplines; on a related note, Bergmann and Zepernick include a helpful set of questions for students in the article's Appendix which can be used to conduct further research at JCCC. I found it surprising that their students did not see any distinction between writing in a literature course and writing in a composition course, but more importantly it was disturbing to learn the students did not see how writing in English courses related to writing in other courses. That seems to be a failure in terms of both instruction and curriculum. Here Bergmann and Zepernick refer to this disconnect between what writing teachers seek to accomplish and what their students actually achieve or understand: "Students [in the study] seemed to be

completely unaware that the purpose of [first-year composition] might be to help them turn their rhetorical 'street smarts' into conscious methods of analysis—of situation-specific audiences, discourse communities, rhetorical situations, and relevant textual models—that they could then apply to writing situations in other contexts” (134). How can writing teachers show students that what they do in our courses has value? How should we revise our courses to highlight knowledge, skills, and practices that are valuable to students beyond composition? These are crucial questions Bergmann and Zepernick bring to the forefront.

Bernander, Ruth, and Brenda Refaei. “Helping Faculty in Two-Year Colleges Use Eportfolios for Promoting Student Writing.” *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2017, pp. 89-106.

The “TYCA Guidelines for Preparing Teachers of English in the Two-Year College,” according to Bernander and Refaei, need to be revised in order to include pedagogically sound use of e-portfolios as a best practice. Given their research and experience, Bernander and Refaei propose that “eportfolio pedagogy should be an essential practice for a highly competent two-year English faculty member responsible for helping students at these institutions where students may have a critical need to learn that they really can be agents of their own learning” (89). Research shows, the co-authors suggest, that “eportfolios are a high-impact practice that positively influences student success” (90) and promote “self-discovery” by giving “students the opportunity to transfer their learning from one context to another” (90). Bernander and Refaei note that teachers at two-year colleges are less likely to use e-portfolios than their counterparts at four-year public and private institutions. When two-year college faculty seek to integrate e-portfolio pedagogy into the ways they teach writing, the article highlights, “There are three major roadblocks that must be passed: the threshold concepts of reflection and student agency, the learning bottleneck of technology, and the practice roadblocks of funding and infrastructure” (93). Bernander’s and Refaei’s interviews with other composition teachers who have varying degrees of expertise in using e-portfolios at the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College indicate, they suggest, that these roadblocks can be overcome. Ultimately, the co-authors urge readers to support including “portfolio pedagogy

and eportfolio implementation” as an expectation for current and prospective English professors at two-year colleges (100).

This article is valuable in particular because of its focus on e-portfolio pedagogy for those teaching students at two-year colleges. Regarding pedagogy, here the co-authors provide helpful advice: “Faculty must provide scaffolding to help students learn to connect their work with course outcomes in such a way that students are able to develop their own theories of writing” (91). I need to create a structured process to give students opportunities to invent, test, and revise theories related to their understanding of writing. Bernander and Refaei make clear connections between e-portfolios and the transfer of learning, explaining how “Eportfolios . . . provide a space and a reliable method for students to curate their work in such a way that they are able to make connections between their previous writing and their current writing” and “provide the materials and space for students to develop their metacognitive awareness about their writing ability” (92). Finally, this article describes professional development approaches in place at the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College that might work at other institutions like JCCC to provide support for teachers interested in adopting e-portfolios. As experienced users of digital portfolios Bernander and Rafaei have “offered workshops and an eportfolio-focused professional learning community” that enable more experienced faculty members to mentor less experienced ones (97-98). Following the article is a helpful list of “Resources for Faculty Development” and “Workshop and Learning Community Sample Agendas” with some links (including YouTube videos).

Brent, Doug. “Crossing Boundaries: Co-op Students Relearning to Write.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 64, no. 4, 2012, pp. 558-592.

Brent interprets his research involving the writing experiences of six co-op students. He conducted the research to help “shed more light on what aspects of a rhetorical education—if any—transfer from school to workplace” (559). A person’s rhetorical education, according to Brent, includes his or her postsecondary experiences outside of writing courses. Brent explains his special interest in “the transfer of knowledge and skill from the academic world to the workplace—arguably the largest reach for learning transfer, and also the one with the most

long-term consequences for students who may spend four years in the academy and four decades in the workforce” (560-561). According to Brent, “transforming rhetorical knowledge” (567) should be the goal of rhetorical education. A few themes emerged from his series of interviews with the co-op students over a four-month period: students made similar connections related to the value of learning to be clear and concise in the college courses, emphasized their search for—and use of—models they could adapt, referenced the role of research in their work, indicated the importance of audience awareness, mentioned the ability to read critically as well as summarize what they read, negotiate a variety of tasks at the same time, and employ “common sense” to figure out how to complete those tasks. What does the study show? It illustrates that “students who have a good sense of rhetorical knowledge are well positioned to adapt well to new rhetorical environments” (588), Brent contends. Furthermore, according to Brent the study “suggests that if explicit teaching of rhetorical principles does anything for students, it does so because it works in concert with a complex rhetorical environment in which they must rapidly adapt to competing rhetorical exigencies” (590). Finally, he argues that “if we can help [students] become more conscious about what to observe and what questions to ask in new rhetorical environments, we will have gone a long way toward helping them transform, if not simply transfer, this [rhetorical] knowledge” (590).

Brent’s article helps me to see what he calls “redefinitions of transfer” by those who prefer terms such as “reconstruction” or “boundary crossing” and “reject the modular notion conveyed by the word transfer itself, replacing it with the idea that learners re-create new skills in new contexts by building on foundations laid down in earlier contexts” (563). What should we call “transfer” instead? How do the terms we use impact our findings—including the extent to which we can see evidence of “learning transfer” or “boundary crossing”? His study is limited in scope—a total of six students at the University of Calgary—but offers useful insights from “students [who] were in the thick of boundary crossing, both students and neophyte professionals at the same time, and in most cases coping with the challenge of their first experience of a non-academic environment in which writing was an important workplace tool” (566). Brent makes a compelling case for the argument that writing teachers are only part of our students’ rhetorical education—which underscores how as writing teachers we should be

working cooperatively with teachers in other disciplines to help build and deepen that education.

Cambridge, Darren. *Eportfolios for Lifelong Learning and Assessment*, Jossey-Bass, 2010.

Cambridge's book addresses the development of electronic portfolios for use inside and outside higher education to promote, document, and assess learning. Yet Cambridge does not simply see digital portfolios as learning tools. "While the eportfolio is sometimes discussed as a type of technology or a placeholder for certain kinds of learning," he writes, "I see the eportfolio as fundamentally a type of composition, an emerging genre" (8). According to Cambridge, there are "three cultural ideals implicit in eportfolios—authenticity, integrity, and deliberation" (6) researchers, educators, and policymakers should consider. While he recognizes important distinctions between "personalized" and "standardized" e-portfolios, Cambridge argues that "Excellence in lifelong learning and assessment are inextricably linked" (11-12) and therefore these two kinds of e-portfolios share a common dimension in the sense that "the cultural ideal of authenticity underlies both models" (21). Moving into his discussion of integrity, which he defines as achieving coherence in understanding one's identity across different contexts, Cambridge writes that "More so than other forms of self-representation common in professional and academic contexts, the eportfolio genre facilitates the articulation of integrity" (42). Concerning the third cultural ideal, deliberation, Cambridge expresses his viewpoint that "the eportfolio genre is well suited to contributing to such a deliberative assessment process" (69), one that is public, democratic, based on reason, and informed by the experiences of individuals. The last part of the book discusses how e-portfolios can benefit learners beyond their college experiences, how e-portfolios relate to other ways learners can represent their identities, and how e-portfolios may evolve with new digital technologies. Ultimately, he argues, the e-portfolio is a genre that can promote self-directed, experiential, lifelong learning as well as be a rich resource for assessment of learning.

Cambridge, who has been using electronic portfolios since 1996 and has been a leading scholar on e-portfolio pedagogy, shares his significant expertise for those who want to learn more. Here the author presents a crucial question related to the transfer of learning that e-

portfolios help us to address: “How does academic knowledge relate to knowledge gained from experience beyond the classroom?” (5). Cambridge convincingly argues that digital portfolios can help individuals see relationships between learning inside and outside of the classroom. This article also provides specific examples and relevant analysis of how learners in academic and professional settings are using different types of e-portfolios. To illustrate the relationship he sees between “personalized” and “standardized” e-portfolios, for instance, Cambridge analyzes two examples from college students in capstone courses—one from a student whose e-portfolio uses narrative and reflection to explore his learning experiences in the community studies field and one from a student whose e-portfolio focuses on providing evidence that she has met the standards defined for her secondary education major. He uses a third example (this one created within a professional rather than an academic context) to make the case “that eportfolios can empower individuals to articulate integrity, helping them build professional identities that are integrated with their values and commitments as enacted in their personal and civic lives” (40). Also valuable is Cambridge’s discussion of how leading institutions such as George Mason University, LaGuardia Community College, and Portland State University are using e-portfolios in creative ways that may serve as models for those looking to develop e-portfolio programs.

Cambridge, Darren. “Two Faces of Integrative Learning Online.” *Electronic Portfolios 2.0: Emergent Research on Implementation and Impact*. Edited by Darren Cambridge, Barbara Cambridge, and Kathleen Blake Yancey, Stylus, 2009, pp. 41-49.

Connecting electronic portfolios to integrative learning, Cambridge explains how digital portfolios encourage two kinds of identities: “The *networked self* focuses on creating intentional connections . . . between courses, disciplines, institutions, and groups” while “the *symphonic self* focuses on achieving integrity of the whole” (42). A writer’s choices related to which artifacts to include in a digital portfolio relate more to the networked self, he suggests, while a writer’s choices related to a metaphor or design approach to unify the various artifacts relate more to the symphonic self. According to Cambridge, more work is needed to develop electronic portfolio systems and technologies that enable the development of both identities.

“The future challenge for electronic portfolio practice, and integrative learning more generally, will be to perfect the interface between the networked and symphonic” (48), he writes. As an assistant professor of Internet studies and information literacy at George Mason University and a co-leader of the Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research, Cambridge is an advocate of e-portfolio pedagogy.

“Two Faces of Integrative Learning Online” illustrates how different institutions are using electronic portfolios to aid in student development of identities that help them see relationships among learning experiences and find coherent ways to represent their learning experiences. For instance, Cambridge references his own research to show how those who have “used [the] eFolio Minnesota [system] to create and share electronic portfolios” have recognized the value of such portfolios in helping them “to represent and articulate the relationships between the different spheres of their lives—personal, professional, and academic—showing how they achieved a balance that embodied the values of all three” (44). Another valuable feature of this chapter is Cambridge’s reference to the specific approaches Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research member institutions—including LaGuardia Community College, Clemson University, Kapi’olani Community College, the University of Wolverhampton, and George Mason University—are taking that can aid students in creating digital portfolios and encouraging integrative learning.

Carroll, Lee Ann. *Rehearsing New Roles: How College Students Develop as Writers*, Southern Illinois UP, 2002.

Carroll’s book is based on her study of 20 students at Pepperdine University who collected their writing in portfolios, conducting self-assessment of their work, and participated in both individual and group interviews based on their academic work. She conducted this study as part of an effort “to more fully understand the complex literacy tasks required in college” (5). Rather than “fantasize writing as a stable skill that can simply be applied in different circumstances,” the author contends, teachers across the curriculum should understand writing “as a complex set of abilities developing unevenly through many periods of transition requiring a variety of different roles” (23-24). Carroll interprets findings from a



“study [looking] at similarities across disciplines, especially focusing on the ways students became more consciously aware of the disciplinary conventions in their major academic fields and more adept at negotiating these conventions” (89). Examining student writing from their portfolios revealed to Carroll that students were able to identify “important moments of transition when writing was consciously learned and they understood what was expected” (90). She addresses what many have called “the transfer problem” as it relates to student development in learning across the curriculum: “Often to the frustration of faculty and students, the ‘skills’ acquired in the first two years of college do not smoothly transfer to the more challenging tasks of specialized courses” (91). This is in part due to a misunderstanding of writing development and a lack of appropriate scaffolding, Carroll suggests. “By focusing too much on the sentence-level skills, which they think students should already know,” Carroll warns, “faculty may miss the real problems students have in learning to write in new and more complex ways” in the disciplines (102). In terms of promoting collaboration among peers, Carroll writes that there is room for improvement: “Professors need to structure opportunities, perhaps required conferences and study groups, where all students can talk through what they do and do not understand, an important corollary to learning from written texts” (104). Similarly, she urges professors “to structure class activities carefully” in order “to impact students’ usual writing process” (112); one way is to distribute a significant number of points for both the process/rough draft and revised/final draft they want students to produce, so students are more likely to revise their work. Reflecting on the findings from her four-year longitudinal research project, Carroll writes: “While students in this study certainly brought concepts and knowledge with them to college, the *what* of their thinking was altered by being immersed in new academic subcommunities” (116). It is unreasonable to expect students to become expert or professional writers early in their college careers, asserts Carroll, but students can learn to produce new and increasingly complex types of writing with careful help from their subcommunities over time.

Regarding the question of transfer, Carroll observes that “basic skills” such as those “related to research, style, audience, organization, and analysis, are the kinds of writing strategies that students see as most transferable to future writing tasks,” but she emphasizes

an important point here: “these ‘basic skills’ cannot be taught reductively” (74). Interestingly, Carroll challenges the assumption that the most important question involves whether our students transfer what they learn in composition to other courses. She explains, “if these tools help the novice writer take on more difficult literacy tasks in the time and space of the first-year composition course, then these strategies have value in this setting even if students do not continue to use them in quite the same ways in the future” (75). Carroll’s findings based on her study involving students at Pepperdine University are applicable to our students at JCCC. For instance, she explains how “Few students [at Pepperdine University] follow a coherent sequence of courses designed to build advancing writing skills” (92). While Pepperdine is a four-year institution with upper-level courses and our college has only 100-200 level courses, to what extent does JCCC coherently sequence courses in order to allow for and to promote the advancement of our students’ writing skills? Reading about the experiences of students in the study—including Carolyn, Terri, and Paul—helps me to see that over time college students can learn to recognize the value of learning and become able to apply what they learn in courses related to their majors if students know why “learning disciplinary conventions” is “important” (94). After sharing the results from student surveys, Carroll offers this valuable advice for college professors to keep in mind: “When we judge the individual written texts students produce, we may lose sight of the students themselves as writers struggling with the same problems that all writers, including ourselves, face, and we may forget how many years of experience it takes to learn new strategies” (115). Certainly this is important advice to heed as we make curricular decisions and when we work with students as writers individually.

Carter, Michael. “Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Writing in the Disciplines.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2007, pp. 385-418.

Writing should be situated within—not outside—the disciplines, Carter believes. “The problem for [writing in the disciplines] professionals is how to bridge the gap between writing in and writing outside the disciplines,” Carter explains, and to solve this problem “we need to be able to conceptualize writing in the disciplines in a way that is grounded in the disciplines themselves, a viable alternative to an understanding of writing as universally generalizable”

(387). He uses the term “metagenres” in order to call attention to the relationship between “disciplinary patterns of doing and particular kinds of writing” (391-392) and defines four metagenres: writing that involves problem-solving (e.g. marketing plan), writing that involves empirical inquiry (e.g. lab report), writing that involves use of sources (e.g. annotated bibliography or research-based argument), and writing that involves performance (e.g. editorial or PowerPoint presentation). Rather than “understand disciplines as domains of specialized knowledge and writing as general across disciplines,” Carter asserts, faculty members should “come to understand that what counts as good writing is writing that meets the expectations of faculty in their disciplines” and consider the “[writing in the disciplines] professional [as] an agent for helping faculty achieve their expectations for what students should be able to do” (408). Ultimately, Carter believes that thinking in terms of metagenres and metadisciplines is valuable because it helps teachers see how the disciplines relate.

While most of Carter’s article is theoretical, he offers some noteworthy recommendations about how to improve efforts to help students become more effective writers. One recommendation is “to offer workshops for faculty from disciplines within the same metadiscipline” in order to “help them to see the generic ways of doing and knowing that link their disciplines and then to discover collectively how those ways of doing and knowing are instantiated in writing” (407). I believe such workshops could promote collaboration among faculty and perhaps generate ways to make sure students are able to write within the disciplines effectively. These workshops may also lead to productive partnerships among faculty as co-teachers (in a learning community, for instance). Also helpful is the example Carter offers based on his first-hand experience with defining and assessing “good writing” within North Carolina State University’s Campus Writing and Speaking Program. His program may serve as a model for “identifying course or program learning outcomes and helping [faculty] incorporate writing as a means of both teaching and evaluating the outcomes” (409) at other institutions. This article does not directly address transfer. Like Harris’ article, though, Carter’s article is relevant to my research focus because it addresses how to structure a program or course so that teachers and students can see important connections between learning in one course and learning in another course.

Clark, Irene L., and Andrea Hernandez. "Genre Awareness, Academic Argument, and Transferability." *WAC Journal*, vol. 22, 2011, pp. 65-78.

Genre awareness should be viewed as a threshold concept, Clark and Hernandez suggest, and in their view teaching genre awareness is quite different from simply teaching students to write in different genres. "When students acquire genre awareness, they are not only learning how to write in a particular genre. They are also gaining insight into how a genre fulfills a rhetorical purpose and how the various components of a text, the writer, the intended reader, and the text itself, is informed by purpose" (66-67), according to the co-authors. In response to the question of how writing should be taught—given that teaching writing in a disciplinary context rather than in a separate composition course is often not an option—Clark and Hernandez propose that one answer "may be found in the concept of genre awareness as a means of facilitating transfer from one writing context to another" (68). Based on their research project focused on 24 first-year writing students enrolled in a course designed to promote genre awareness, the co-authors conclude that although "when students are taught genres outside of their context, they will focus more on surface and structural elements than rhetorical features" (75) their research also indicates that genre awareness "constitutes a threshold concept that is necessary for students to master before they can proceed to write effectively in other contexts" (76). Teaching genre awareness, therefore, is crucial in Clark's and Hernandez's view.

One of the most interesting findings from their research involves a surprise. Clark and Hernandez explain that although a goal of their course focused on genre awareness "was to wean students away from the 5-paragraph essay," at the end of the course more students—not fewer—believed the five-paragraph essay to be useful (74). The authors present a useful theory about why many students may rely on the five-paragraph approach they learned in high school even though it often does not work in future writing situations: "without genre awareness, [students] will not understand how the text 'works' to fulfill its purpose, and when they encounter a new genre in another course, they may lack the tools to engage with it effectively, which explains why students fall back so fixedly on the omnipresent five-paragraph essay" (67). Given the limited scope of their research—one writing class at the University of

California, Northridge—it is not representative enough to make larger claims about the extent to which teaching genre awareness through the kinds of assignments Clark and Hernandez describe facilitates the transfer of writing knowledge and skills. However, the article raises valid questions. Does self-reporting (such as through the interviews and reflective essays these researchers used) accurately reflect what students think or know or can do as writers? How can researchers and teachers accurately measure genre awareness? To what degree might helping students develop genre awareness reduce their anxiety when encountering new writing situations?

Clark, J. Elizabeth, and Bret Eynon. "E-portfolios at 2.0—Surveying the Field." *Peer Review*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2009, pp. 18-23.

Clark and Eynon are writing to those interested in e-portfolio pedagogy and trends related to the use of digital portfolios. "Linked to sweeping economic, demographic, political, and technological changes," they write, "the e-portfolio is an increasingly salient feature of the changing educational landscape" (18). In fact, almost 60 percent of colleges and universities in United States implement some form of e-portfolio, the co-authors state. They examine "four major drivers" that help to account for the "e-portfolio movement's growth in the past ten years" (19). These factors include "a growing interest in student-centered active learning" that focuses on students being responsible for making connections as learners, "the dynamism of digital communication technologies" that allow for creation of digital texts, "the pressure for increased accountability in higher education" from those who grant accreditation, and a trend involving "increasing fluidity in employment and education" related to changing career tracks (19-20). According to Clark and Eynon, "The growth of e-portfolio use is directly related to its elasticity, to the diversity of purposes for which it can be used, including enriched learning and improved career development, transfer, and assessment" (21). Other trends the authors discuss involve how e-portfolio software platforms are becoming easier to use—with less technological experience needed—and how international higher education institutions are increasingly using e-portfolios. The authors claim that ideally e-portfolios offer the "opportunity to harness the power of imagery and digital media to advance cognitive

processes” (22). Finally, they suggest what needs to happen to help e-portfolios grow successfully as learning tools that remains relevant. First, “For e-portfolios to continue to be attractive to students, e-portfolio systems need to approach the ease and interactive features of social networking sites . . . and Web authoring platforms like Blogger, TypePad, and Wordpress” (23). Second, “The e-portfolio movement must find ways to address [accreditation and related accountability] needs without sacrificing its focus on student engagement, student ownership, and enriched student learning” (23). Third, “As technology continues to connect our world, our e-portfolios must begin to translate across cultures and national boundaries, enriching the global conversation about education” (23). More research and international collaboration are necessary, Clark and Eynon suggest.

Representing the perspective of educators at LaGuardia Community College, CUNY, Clark and Eynon provide context related to factors driving the increased use of e-portfolios as well as important challenges going forward. I find their explanation of what different national and international institutions are doing with e-portfolios particularly useful because I now have a greater sense of the scope of e-portfolio use across institutions. Clark and Eynon also raise questions that deserve more reflection: Should the e-portfolio “movement” become a “field”? How does the use of e-portfolios need to change in order to stay relevant (in terms of maintaining student interest and meeting the needs of accreditation as well as assessment)? Why is the international development and coordination of e-portfolios important? The sidebars included with this article also give details about how e-portfolios work at Washington State University and LaGuardia Community College.

DasBender, Gita. “Liminal Space as a Generative Site of Struggle: Writing Transfer and L2 Students.” *Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer*, edited by Chris M. Anson and Jessie L. Moore, UP of Colorado, 2017, pp. 273-298.

Focusing on the experiences of second language (L2) students, DasBender examines the extent to which these learners transfer their writing knowledge or practice. Her research concentrated on two case studies involving multilingual students in a writing course. The L2 students were asked to write a literacy narrative and three reflective essays throughout the

course. Analysis of data from student narratives and reflections indicated, according to DasBender, “that L2 students’ socio-cultural background, the prior writing knowledge they carry from L1 settings, and the extent of their metacognitive awareness of linguistic and rhetorical differences in writing can not only foster or disrupt writing transfer, but also play a critical role in their development as multilingual writers in a US educational context” (273). In addition to having conversations with students about how rhetorical traditions (such as those in the United States and China) differ, DasBender believes teachers should be making use of reflective writing throughout their courses. If teachers “administer focused writing prompts at the beginning of the semester when students reflect upon skills, abilities, and prior writing knowledge they bring to the course,” DasBender proposes, teachers would have “critical information about L2 students’ self-perception as related to writing abilities” and they would “allow students to recall how prior writing situations and experiences have shaped their development as writers” (293). Finally, the author calls on readers to conduct new research on the development of L2 students as writers.

This source is valuable because of its emphasis on writing transfer for L2 learners. As DasBender explains, considering the challenges students encounter “during the ‘liminal’ stage—a period of disorientation essential to a growing awareness of learning—that leads to disciplinary identity formation and participation” (278) is particularly important when teaching L2 students. DasBender’s article shares the prompts for the “Literacy History Narrative” and “Reflective Writing” exercises she had students complete—and shares the responses of Shiyu and Ming, the subjects of her case studies. These prompts and student responses may be of special interest to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructors at JCCC who are concerned about what DasBender identifies as “L2 transfer issues, particularly for novice L2 writers” (288). Despite these issues, the article suggests, there is proof that writing transfer can occur, at some level, for L2 students. Referring to Shiyu’s and Ming’s experiences, DasBender suggests that there is “evidence of their deepened perspectives on writing and becoming writers” (293) as demonstrated by their reflective writing. Although it is difficult to generalize based on the two case studies DasBender presents, her findings show that structured and consistent reflection

asking L2 students to articulate their strategies for overcoming challenges is essential for promoting writing transfer.

Donahue, Christiane. "Transfer, Portability, Generalization: (How) Does Composition Expertise 'Carry'?" *Exploring Composition Studies: Sites, Issues, Perspectives*, edited by Kelly Ritter and Paul Kai Matsuda, Utah State UP, 2012, pp. 145-166.

Donahue addresses common assumptions about writing transfer and offer recommendations about how compositionists can contribute to interdisciplinary conversations about the transfer of learning. She explains that while "Writing teachers have tended to assume writing abilities or skills" transfer more or less automatically, "there is little evidence that such transfer commonly occurs" (146). According to Donahue, "transfer is more likely to occur when teachers provide work that is appropriately challenging to students' current ability levels" and "when [teachers scaffold] the learning of new material" in ways that accommodate different learning styles among students (151). Regarding the role of meta-awareness or metacognition, she writes that "Our practices—portfolio narratives, last-day-of-class responses, literacy narratives—are built on the assumption that self-reflection improves transferrable knowledge" (155). The article ends with Donahue's proposals. First, in terms of research, she argues, "We should focus our attention in the twenty-first century on how existing and future transfer research can help shape answers to our deep questions" such as where the responsibility for transfer lies, how transfer can be fostered, and even whether "transfer" should continue to be the term we use (161). Second, in terms of practice, Donahue contends that "Even as we pursue research, we must inform current practice with what we have understood so far" because, unfortunately, "Transfer does not just take care of itself" (164)—and therefore teachers must find effective ways to encourage it.

Especially valuable is Donahue's "review of essential literature from education, psychology, sociology and, more recently, composition studies, on transfer" with an emphasis on "[describing] what 'writing' might be if we study it as 'knowledge that transfers'" (145). I also appreciate Donahue's affirmation that each type of transfer Perkins and Salomon define—"high road" transfer and "low road" transfer—"has a role in what we hope students will



achieve,” and therefore it is “not the case” that high road transfer is “more valuable” than low road transfer (149). On a related note, Donahue clearly explains these key terms: “Vertical transfer is what’s learned in one context that is (re)used in a next-level-up higher function, acting in fact as a prerequisite for that next level, as opposed to lateral transfer, in which what is learned in one context is simply (re)used in another parallel context” (150). She also makes me question what type(s) of research I might conduct in order to learn about writing transfer and how to promote it when she writes that “almost everything the field has learned about transfer has been from longitudinal studies, most often ethnographies or case studies” (159). What role(s) might other forms of research play? Can I use the results of my department’s recent assessment work—including survey responses from composition students across all of our sections—as legitimate material to help determine the extent to which our college’s students are learning to apply their writing knowledge? Should I conduct longitudinal studies with my own students throughout their two years at the college or extend the studies further throughout their entire college careers?

Downs, Douglas, and Elizabeth Wardle. “Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: (Re)envisioning ‘First-Year Composition’ as ‘Introduction to Writing Studies.’” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 58, no. 4, 2007, pp. 552-584.

Downs and Wardle suggest a fundamental change in how we think about and teach writing. The co-authors argue for a shift “from teaching ‘how to write in college’ to teaching about writing—from acting as if writing is a basic, universal skill to acting as if writing studies is a discipline with content knowledge to which students should be introduced, thereby changing their understandings about writing and thus changing the ways they write” (553). Taking such an approach, “reimagining [first-year composition] as Intro to Writing Studies might create more natural gateways to [writing across the curriculum] and [writing in the disciplines] programs than [first-year composition] typically does now” (554), Downs and Wardle suggest. Misconceptions—including the notions that a “universal” discourse exists and that students can learn to write in just one or two college courses—have influenced the common view of first-year composition as skills-based and have resulted in a teaching focus more on form and

grammar than context and content. They also warn readers to avoid oversimplifying the goal of composition: “[Asking] teachers to teach ‘academic writing’ begs the question: which academic writing, what content, for what activity, context, and audience?” (556). Downs has implemented this Writing about Writing curriculum at the University of Utah and Wardle has done the same at the University of Dayton. In their curriculum writing is the content of the course, writing is a complex activity that requires attention to discursive expectations as well as contextual factors, and writing has the same rules for novices as for experts. The course asks students to read published scholarship in writing studies, reflect on these readings in light of their experiences, conduct primary research, and report on as well as present their work. According to Downs and Wardle, their case studies involving two students illustrate potential benefits of teaching composition as an Introduction to Writing Studies course: more awareness by students about their own writing, more confidence in their reading abilities, and more recognition that research-based writing is a conversation. Responding to the criticism that their approach may not improve student writing, Downs and Wardle contend that such an approach can promote learning applicable beyond first-year composition: “Teaching students what we know about writing and asking them to research their own writing and the writing of others encourages this self-reflection and mindfulness [Perkins and Salomon emphasize], thereby improving the possibility that students will maintain a stance of inquiry toward writing as they write in other disciplinary systems” (577). Reimagining first-year composition as a course that introduces students to writing studies, they conclude, is beneficial because it focuses on writing as the object of study, teaches students research-based writing concepts they can apply, and gives more legitimacy to the discipline of writing studies.

Here Downs and Wardle include an important disclaimer that helps me to clarify their stance on writing transfer and teaching for transfer: “We are not arguing that transfer of writing knowledge cannot happen; rather, we are arguing that ‘far transfer’ is difficult . . . and that most current incarnations of [first-year composition] do not teach it as explicitly as is necessary” (557). If teaching first-year composition as Introduction to Writing studies means “*teaching realistic and useful conceptions of writing*” (557), this approach fits with my goal of fostering the application of writing knowledge. Asking students to become writing scholars

may help to demystify writing, which many students see as something you are either “good at” or “not good at,” as the authors suggest when they explain that their curriculum gives students “a new outlook on writing as a researchable activity rather than a mysterious talent” (560). They offer helpful suggestions of readings—such as “Learned School Literacy” by Rick Evans and “A Stranger in Strange Lands” by Lucille Parkinson McCarthy—which can fit with my goals by encouraging students to “reflect on how their past reading and writing experiences shaped them” and gain more insight into the challenges of “writing in new classrooms” (561). I need to see more evidence that this curriculum is more beneficial than the typical (“academic discourse” or “college writing”) curriculum, but the article makes me reconsider some assumptions about what first-year composition should do.

Driscoll, Dana Lynn. “Connected, Disconnected, or Uncertain: Student Attitudes about Future Writing Contexts and Perceptions of Transfer from First Year Writing to the Disciplines.” *Across the Disciplines: A Journal of Language, Learning, and Academic Writing*, vol. 8, no. 2, Dec. 2011, <https://wac.colostate.edu/ATD/articles/driscoll2011/index.cfm>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2017.

In this article Driscoll presents and interprets the results of her study intended to examine “the relationship between students’ perception of transfer from first-year composition (FYC) into disciplinary coursework and their beliefs and attitudes towards themselves, their writing, and their educational environments.” Her study included a set of surveys with approximately 150 students as well as interviews with 15 of those students. Driscoll asserts that her study shows “the attitudes students bring with them about writing impact their perceptions of the transferability of writing knowledge; because we know transfer of learning is an ‘active’ process, these attitudes may be detrimental to their ability to learn and effectively use prior writing knowledge in disciplinary courses.” One of the study’s major findings, Driscoll explains, was that at the end of the semester students were less confident about whether first-year composition would “transfer” than at the beginning of the semester. Second, the study indicated four categories of students that help to characterize their attitudes about the relationship between writing in FYC and future writing: “explicitly connected,” “implicitly

connected,” “uncertain,” and “disconnected.” A third finding was that most students had a limited definition of writing (one that often did not consider rhetorical and disciplinary aspects of writing). Driscoll offers six recommendations based on her findings: teachers should “[encourage] students to engage in metacognitive reflection about their writing and learning,” should “[encourage] students and instructors to learn about future writing contexts and connect learning to those contexts,” should not “assume that transfer occurs” but instead “directly address transfer issues through explicit teaching,” should “[ask] students to practice skills in various contexts and encourage them to understand how skills can be generalized or applied across contexts,” should not “dismiss prior writing knowledge” but rather “work to connect it to current writing practice,” and should “[ensure] that students know how different skills connect to each other and how knowledge builds upon previous knowledge.” Teachers can encourage learning transfer by teaching for it explicitly and helping students see how writing they have done already can apply to writing they may do in the future, Driscoll concludes.

This article defines key concepts and approaches related to teaching for transfer. In the section titled “Types of Transfer” Driscoll adds to my understanding of transfer by discussing two forms of “high road” transfer” defined as “forward reaching” and “backward reaching.” She explains the relationship clearly here: “Forward reaching transfer refers to the ability of individuals to anticipate future situations where they may need the knowledge and skills they are currently learning. Backward-reaching transfer takes place when an individual encounters a new situation and uses prior knowledge. Notice that with both forward reaching and backward reaching transfer, it is imperative that the individual make a *conscious* effort to either draw upon old knowledge or retain current knowledge for the future.” This is an important point about the types of transfer we should be nurturing and what is necessary on the student’s part to achieve them. The “Teaching for Transfer” section offers some valuable answers to this question she poses: “how can we more effectively approach our teaching to show students how course content within first-year writing is applicable to other disciplines?” Her answers—in the form of the six recommendations defined above—echo those of other scholars such as Yancey, Tinberg, Wardle, Donahue, and Thaiss.

Driscoll, Dana Lynn, and Jennifer Wells. "Beyond Knowledge and Skills: Writing Transfer and the Role of Student Dispositions." *Composition Forum*, no. 26, Fall 2012.

<http://compositionforum.com/issue/26>. Accessed 21 Aug. 2017.

The co-authors argue that writing scholars and teachers concerned with the transfer of learning should give more attention to dispositional qualities, which they argue are distinct from knowledge or skills or abilities. Driscoll and Wells acknowledge the importance of attention to curriculum and different contexts, but they "argue that writing researchers, writing faculty, and writing program administrators (WPAs) should more explicitly consider the role of learners' dispositions because this may allow us to more fully understand and address writing transfer." Their discussion reaches back to the 1960s, suggesting that transfer-related research should "embrace a more nuanced perspective in which both the role of institutional context and the role of the individual and his/her dispositions receive equal consideration" as well as recognize the learner as "the agent of transfer." Driscoll and Wells argue that dispositions previously have been overlooked by researchers including themselves. They zoom in on four dispositions—value, self-efficacy, attribution, and self-regulation—that their research suggests have the greatest impact on successful transfer. Finally, after providing a set of questions related to "three overarching areas for research on dispositions," Driscoll and Wells conclude by asserting that "Writing transfer research [should] seek answers to these questions so that we can better understand what individuals bring with them, how they move through different activity systems, how dispositions impact individual learning, and how we might engage with them in our classrooms and beyond."

Reading this article leads to a series of related questions linked to the four predispositions it highlights. How can we encourage students to value writing, to value what they are learning in our writing courses, and to engage in "mindful abstraction" (Salomon's and Perkins' terms used by Driscoll and Wells) about their writing? How can we help students to develop realistic but positive views of their abilities—or potential—as writers? How can we get students to take responsibility for their own learning? How do we help students to establish reasonable goals as learners? Driscoll and Wells—who arrived at similar conclusions about the importance of dispositional factors in transfer during the course of writing their respective

dissertations—make a clear case for the need to consider the role of value, self-efficacy, attribution, and self-regulation.

Devet, Bonnie. “The Writing Center and Transfer of Learning: A Primer for Directors.” *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2015, pp. 119-151.

The transfer of learning “may be one of the most important subjects the field of composition studies has explored since process itself” (120), Devet writes, and therefore she believes writing center directors need to know about this subject. After she provides readers with definitions of what the transfer of learning is—and is not—Devet turns her attention to explaining what educational psychology has to say about transfer as well as various types of transfer that writing center consultants might encounter. Devet argues, “Educational psychology’s study of the cognition of transfer is vital to writing center work” (127). Writing centers are well-positioned to engage consultants (as well as the students with whom they work) in the transfer of learning and become sites for further transfer research, according to the author. “It seems vital,” Devet asserts, “to invest in and continue to investigate transfer of learning in writing centers” (142). Her article includes strategies for linking the work of writing centers to the goal of encouraging learning transfer.

In the section titled “Other Kinds of Transfer Consultants Engage In,” Devet provides a helpful explanation of two kinds of transfer—conditional and relational—that apply to student tutors as well as students helping peers in other settings such as peer-review workshops. “In conditional transfer,” she writes, “the context (situation) triggers consultants to apply knowledge” while “relational transfer . . . goes further” in that “It emphasizes looking for different causes underlying an event” (124). Especially valuable for other writing center directors may be Devet’s examples of specific approaches she uses to promote transfer of learning among her own consultants. For instance, she explains how requiring consultants to write letters to each other in order to describe and help develop strategies for challenging student-consultant interactions helped consultants find “new techniques” by engaging in “strategic transfer” and “reverse transfer” involving reflection (125). Another example is her requirement for “graduating consultants” to “write short one-piece ‘Advice to the Future’

essays explaining to new consultants how to survive and to thrive in a center” (130). As the Writing Lab Director at the College of Charleston, Devet presents an important viewpoint on the transfer of learning for other directors and for consultants.

*Elon Statement on Writing Transfer*. Elon University Center for Engaged Learning, 2015, <http://cel.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Elon-Statement-Writing-Transfer-2015.pdf>. Accessed 1 Nov. 2017.

This document explains key terms, theories, emerging principles, and recommended practices based on research related to writing transfer. Here the co-authors describe the statement’s purpose: “Developed by 45 writing researchers participating in the 2011-2013 Elon University Research Seminar (ERS) on Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer, this statement summarizes and synthesizes the seminar’s meta-level discussions about writing and transfer, not as an end-point, but in an effort to provide a framework for *continued* inquiry and theory-building.” In terms of future research, the statement emphasizes the importance of “using mixed methods across contexts to achieve a ‘scalable’ understanding of writing transfer—enabling teacher-scholars both to focus in detail on specific communities of practice and activity systems *and* to ‘zoom out’ to examine working principles of writing transfer that apply across contexts.” Integrating the work of scholars from different fields, the statement includes a bibliography divided into the categories of “Writing Studies Scholarship” and “Learning and Transfer Theory Scholarship.”

Because it offers an overview of what education and writing studies scholars have said about the transfer of learning, the statement is a useful resource for those who would like a synopsis of conversations related to the transfer question. I find the “Enabling Practices” section most valuable. Here the authors highlight three approaches that have merit because they are based on extensive research and reflect what my other sources have suggested are best practices if our goal is to teach for transfer. First, according to the statement, “Constructing writing curricula and classes that focus on study of and practice with concepts [such as audience, purpose, and genre] that enable students to analyze expectations for writing and learning within specific contexts” is important. Second, “Asking students to engage in

activities that foster the development of metacognitive awareness, including asking good questions about writing situations and developing heuristics for analyzing unfamiliar writing situations” is crucial. Third, “Explicitly modeling transfer-focused thinking and the application of metacognitive awareness as a conscious and explicit part of a process of learning” is necessary. All three practices are going to be part of my revised, teaching-for-transfer course and related e-portfolio.

Eynon, Bret, Laura M. Gambino, and Judit Török. “What Difference Can ePortfolio Make? A Field Report from the Connect to Learning Project.” *International Journal of ePortfolio*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2014, pp. 95-114.

This article reports on and draws conclusions based on the findings of Connect to Learning (C2L), a nationwide project involving ePortfolio teams representing 24 institutions. According to its co-authors, the article “examines C2L findings organized around three propositions: (1) ePortfolio initiatives advance student success; (2) Making student learning visible, ePortfolio initiatives support reflection, social pedagogy, and deep learning; and (3) ePortfolio initiatives catalyze learning-centered institutional change” (96). To support the first proposition, the authors provide evidence suggesting that a correlation exists between e-portfolio use and positive academic outcomes. “At a growing number of campuses with sustained ePortfolio initiatives,” they write, “student ePortfolio usage correlates with higher levels of student success, as measured by pass rates, GPA, and retention rates” (96). Regarding the second proposition, Eynon, Gambino, and Török offer evidence indicating that e-portfolios can promote learning in important ways. They explain, “campus practices and the survey data both suggest that the value of the ePortfolio experience emerges from the ways it makes learning visible, facilitating connective reflection, sharing, and deeper, more integrative learning” (98). Finally, the co-authors offer examples related to the third proposition, writing that “ePortfolio initiatives can catalyze campus cultural and structural change, helping the institution move towards becoming a learning organization” (104). In the article’s conclusion, Eynon, Gambino, and Török call on researchers and educators to support the development of e-



portfolio initiatives in response to economic, institutional, cultural, and technological changes so that e-portfolios can become more viable and powerful tools for learning.

This article provides valuable insight into the importance of carefully designing, implementing, and revising e-portfolio initiatives or programs to make sure they are effective. Successful use of e-portfolios is dependent on reflection by learners and educators. “As experienced ePortfolio practitioners know,” Eynon, Gambino, and Török emphasize, “meaningful reflection does not just happen. Skillful and intentional pedagogy is required from faculty and staff” (98). All three authors have extensive experience as e-portfolio researchers and practitioners through their work in higher education. Eynon, Gambino, and Török offer evidence—in the form of data and testimony—showing e-portfolios can make a positive difference for us as teachers, for our students, and for our institutions. They show that use of e-portfolios increased pass and retention rates at LaGuardia Community College and Queensborough Community College (96-97); likewise, Tunxis Community College retention rates increased when students were enrolled in courses that required the development of an e-portfolio (99). While perhaps less convincing than the data the authors offer, the testimony from faculty at C2L institutions like Salt Lake Community College is anecdotal evidence indicating that e-portfolios can help to transform students and institutions.

Fishman, Jenn, and Mary Jo Reiff. “Taking it on the Road: Transferring Knowledge about Writing and Rhetoric across Curricula and Campuses.” *Composition Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2011, pp. 121-144.

Fishman and Reiff discuss their “redesigned FYC [first-year composition] sequence focused on knowledge domains and skills that transfer across writing contexts, such as rhetorical knowledge, knowledge of writing processes, and engagement with multiple literacies and diverse research methods” (121) at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Their pedagogical approach, the co-authors explain, involves a two-course sequence in which students develop an awareness of their knowledge as writers before they apply their writing knowledge by producing a variety of texts for target audiences. Fishman and Reiff argue that their “decision to focus on rhetoric” made it possible “to pursue connections between FYC and

expert communities both within and beyond the academy” (129). Composition researcher, teachers, and administrators should work as partners with those who represent different disciplines to promote writing transfer and teaching for transfer, they suggest.

This article is especially interesting because of its focus on the relationship between the two courses in the composition sequence. For instance, Fishman and Reiff explain how the second course is intended to follow from the first course: “Building on lessons learned in English 101, English 102 shifts the focus from reception to inquiry and production, giving students the opportunity to practice three general modes of investigation: ‘hands on’ research or fieldwork, historical research, and academic research” (125). How do we know that students can “build on” or apply what they have learned in the previous course in the sequence? This is a question the article raises—but does not answer—although its appendix includes syllabi that show how the two courses in the sequence (ENGL 101 and ENGL 102) seek to help students acquire, recognize, expand, and apply rhetorical writing knowledge.

Gallagher, Chris W., and Laurie L. Poklop. “ePortfolios and Audience: Teaching a Critical Twenty-First Century Skill.” *International Journal of ePortfolio*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2014, pp. 7-20.

Gallagher and Poklop link digital portfolios to digital literacy in this article directed to e-portfolio scholars and practitioners. “The ability to craft compositions that successfully negotiate multiple audiences’ needs and expectations is a critical twenty-first century skill,” they write, and continue, “The multimodal and digital affordances of ePortfolios provide a unique opportunity to teach this skill because they can, and often should, offer different experiences to different readers/viewers” (7). To learn more about the role of audience—and how audience is theorized—in digital portfolios, Gallagher and Poklop conducted interviews with students and teachers as well as analyzed electronic portfolios from Northeastern University’s first-year writing program. Through their study the co-authors found that no matter the form they take e-portfolios are changing the ways in which instructors teach audience, leading students to see opportunities to write to readers beyond their instructors, and making students more aware of their rhetorical choices; however, Gallagher and Poklop

also found that students were hesitant to publish their e-portfolios for external audiences and students experienced mixed success in terms of shaping their e-portfolios for multiple audiences. Referencing the e-portfolios they studied, the co-authors emphasize “three key rhetorical moves that largely determined the success of the ePortfolio in negotiating multiple audiences’ needs and expectations: intentional design of structure and navigation; contextualization of content and artifacts; and flexible use of voices” (14). Finally, Gallagher and Poklop offer these recommendations: “We believe that students (and teachers) would benefit from explicitly addressing students’ prior knowledge about writing and portfolios; developing a robust concept of audience; exploring who reads online writing and how; clarifying how student writing, including web-based writing, circulates; and attending to the alignment (or misalignment) of purposes and audiences for student writing” (18).

This article compels readers to reconsider the concept of audience in the context of creating, organizing, and revising digital portfolios. As Gallagher and Poklop show, rather than a fixed target audience “the audience for student ePortfolios is usually, perhaps always, *multiple*” (7). The co-authors discuss the implications of their study for ePortfolio pedagogy when they explain that “students must be taught to compose” for multiple audiences in rhetorically-sophisticated ways because this ability “does not just happen” and “For this reason, a robust conception of audience is necessary not only for the ePortfolio community, but also for teachers and students” (10). Furthermore, Gallagher and Poklop bring to attention a problem e-portfolios may create for students attempting to negotiate multiple audiences: “The portfolios of students who attempted to write for both their teacher and another audience, mass or not, often exhibited what we came to call *audience interference*, a phenomenon that results when students unsuccessfully attempt to meet the differing expectations and needs of more than one audience in the same ePortfolio” (13). How can we prevent such interference? The article offers strategies through a discussion of sample ePortfolios that have—or lack—three rhetorical features the authors suggest are imperative: a design that readers perceive as purposeful and clear, a context to help readers make sense of the ePortfolio’s content, and a stylistic flexibility that accommodates different readers with unique interests in the ePortfolio. I plan to implement these strategies when creating my own digital portfolio and when helping

students create their digital portfolios. While it does not overtly address the transfer of learning, Gallagher's and Poklop's article discusses the use of e-portfolios as tools to promote the application of writing knowledge and practice—especially related to audience awareness—by college students.

Harris, Joe. "Undisciplined Writing." *Delivering Composition: The Fifth Canon*, edited by Kathleen Blake Yancey, Boynton/Cook, 2006, pp. 155-167.

In this chapter Harris addresses the ongoing debate about "the status of composition," arguing that "we need to imagine composition not as a new discipline, but as a kind of intellectual work that takes place *outside* the conventional academic disciplines, that resists the allure both of English and of becoming a separate field of its own" (155-156). The author uses Duke University's Writing Program to illustrate what he calls "a way of thinking about the work of composition," more specifically, "the labor of teaching basic and first-year writing" (156). Beginning in 2000, Harris explains, Duke University started requiring all undergraduate students to complete a first-year academic writing seminar and a set of second-year writing in the disciplines (WID) courses. Those who teach academic writing come from a variety of disciplines, although they are required to complete a training program focused on teaching writing. One benefit of this approach, Harris suggests, is that students "select a section of academic writing as they would any other course—that is, by what most grabs their attention" (159). What aspects of writing are most teachable? According to Harris, "drafting and revising" as well as "making texts public" (160) are. Who should be responsible for teaching writing? Harris believes "The teaching of writing should be a university-wide and multidisciplinary project, not a departmental fiefdom" (164). Those who direct writing programs, he argues, should focus less on "delivering a *curriculum*" and more on "recruiting and supporting a faculty who can design and teach their own, strong courses in writing" (166). Harris suggests that Duke University's undergraduate program may serve as a helpful model of this WID approach.

Although Harris does not directly address writing for transfer or teaching for transfer in this chapter, his ideas are relevant to fundamental concerns about how to promote good writing across the curriculum. One of his most interesting ideas is about which aspects of

writing are most “teachable”—including “drafting,” “revising,” and “making texts public” (160). How are drafting and revising portable writing abilities? In what ways can students learn new ways of sharing and promoting their writing? These questions help me think about what a writing program, course, or portfolio designed to promote the transfer of writing knowledge and skills should accomplish.

Haskell, Robert E. *Transfer of Learning: Cognition, Instruction, and Reasoning*. Academic Press, 2001.

Haskell approaches the problem of transfer based on his perspective as a psychology professor and researcher. “The aim of all education . . . is to apply what we learn in different contexts, and to recognize and extend that learning to completely new situations,” writes Haskell, “Collectively, this is called transfer of learning” (3). He summarizes “the transfer paradox” this way: “Given the importance of transfer and the prevalence of everyday transfer—we have failed to significantly achieve it” (10) in educational settings. “Teaching that promotes transfer,” Haskell contends, “involves returning again and again to an idea or procedure but on different levels and in different contexts, with apparently ‘different’ examples” (27). After defining levels of transfer and types of transfer, Haskell presents eleven principles that he believes are required in order for successful transfer of learning to be achieved. In order to promote transfer teachers need to help students (a) develop knowledge—not just skills—within the transfer area, (b) develop a base of knowledge outside the transfer area, (c) understand the history of the transfer area or areas, (d) find the necessary motivation or exigence for transfer, (e) recognize how transfer of learning functions, (f) understand their learning in terms of transfer, (g) create cultural environments that promote transfer, (h) understand the theoretical foundations of the transfer area, (i) practice extensively, (j) allow adequate time for transfer to occur, (k) and study the work of those who excel in the transfer of learning. The book concludes with an explanation of what Haskell calls “deep-context teaching,” which he suggests “involves addressing the conditions surrounding a subject matter” as well as addressing “students’ expectations, beliefs, and values related to learning” (219). If our aim is to educate—rather than simply train—students and to promote transfer, Haskell argues, we must

engage in deep-context teaching even though it reduces the amount of time we can devote in class to teaching course content.

Haskell makes an important connection between transfer of learning and writing knowledge: “There is virtually no good evidence that learning to write well in one content area will transfer to other content areas. The reason is that to write well requires not just the rhetorical and compositional skill involved in writing, but a considerable knowledge base in each of the areas the student is to write about” (14). This matches up with what Nowacek argues about how genre knowledge functions. What is required for instructors to teach for transfer, though? Haskell makes a crucial link here to what teachers must be able to do if they seek to promote the transfer of learning: “before students can be expected or taught to transfer their learning, teachers also need to become proficient at transfer thinking” (42). He’s right. Teachers need to learn how the transfer of learning works as well as how to think in ways that make and foster connections from learning in one context to another. I believe Haskell is also correct about the need for us to cultivate what he calls “the spirit of transfer,” defined as “a learner’s state of being” that involves “a psychological, emotional, and motivational disposition toward deep learning” (116-117). In addition, this statement offers insight into what teaching for transfer requires: “What we must know before we can teach, especially for transfer, is what incorrect theories students have in their heads” (159). As Haskell suggests, in order to teach for transfer we must help students identify their existing theories, test those theories, and modify (or create new) theories because often “old knowledge interferes with new knowledge” (160). While Haskell’s book rarely connects transfer to writing or composition, the book is valuable because it helps teachers understand how transfer of learning works and ways to promote it.

Hayes, Hogan, Dana R. Ferris, and Carl Whithaus. “Dynamic Transfer in First-Year Writing and ‘Writing in the Disciplines’ Settings.” *Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer*, edited by Chris M. Anson and Jessie L. Moore, UP of Colorado, 2017, pp. 181-213.

Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus present their findings based on a study of composition students at the University of California Davis (UCD). According to the co-authors, their research supports the conclusion “that a writing program with consistent, explicit, and intentional transfer-oriented learning objectives in both [first-year composition] and advanced composition courses provides a curricular setting that facilitates the transfer of writing skills across contexts” (182). Rather than completely replace the writing knowledge and skills our students have developed in high school—such as the five-paragraph essay—with new writing knowledge or skills, Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus believe that first-year composition should help students learn how to use what they know and can do in order to understand their abilities as writers more fully. They write that “Dynamic transfer,” which “occurs when a learner’s prior knowledge interacts with the target context through the act of coordination,” should be “explicitly [incorporated] into our theoretical framework and research design in order to improve our understanding of transfer” (188). After describing and analyzing the materials used in their study at UCD (including student interviews, surveys, and writing samples), the co-authors end with a discussion of what dynamic transfer involves and how to promote it through program-level decisions. They explain, “dynamic transfer demonstrates how that transformation of prior knowledge relies on resources in the target context, as well as a student’s ability to recognize those resources” (210). Furthermore, “Dynamic transfer shows that appropriate prior knowledge can affect later performances, but only when learners have the time and capacity to use resources in a new environment and make appropriate changes to the prior knowledge” (211), they argue. Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus advocate teaching students to expand on the abstract writing concepts they learn in first-year composition when they approach new writing tasks and having an upper-level college writing requirement to help students develop as writers.

I was interested to learn that at UCD “Instructors all work from a standard teaching-for-transfer syllabus during their first term as teachers” (190) and that “All lower-division writing courses in the program . . . require students to complete a portfolio” including “two artifacts” and “a reflective letter” (191). Right now I am in the process of making my composition course a writing-for-transfer course and developing an e-portfolio intended to foster the transfer of

learning across contexts, so this article provides a useful model. Later in the chapter the authors discuss examples of “critical events” involving four writing students from their study (202-208); these examples help to clarify what the co-authors mean by “dynamic transfer” as it relates to the experiences of college writers. Through the four examples Hayes, Ferris, and Whithaus illustrate that a composition course designed to teach for transfer can support the transfer of learning by students as developing writers.

Horning, Alice S. “Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum: Best Practices and Practical Guidelines.” *Reconnecting Reading and Writing*, edited by Alice S. Horning and Elizabeth W. Kraemer, Parlor Press, 2013, pp. 71-88.

In this chapter Horning reviews scholarship on the reading-writing connection to help “classroom teachers looking for ways to work consistently on reading while helping students develop their writing” and she discusses “overall goals that warrant attention” as well as “specific approaches for . . . first year composition and courses across the curriculum” (71). Drawing on the work of college reading researcher David Jolliffe, Horning suggests that writing program administrators and instructors should “[incorporate] several kinds of reading material, such as memoranda and reports, in addition to textbooks, that more realistically reflect the kinds of reading students do,” should “determine our outcomes for reading in the writing class and work backward from them,” and should test students to see where they are as readers so we can determine “what techniques and strategies need to be taught” (72). In terms of pedagogy, Horning argues, “Too little time is devoted to explaining *how to* actively read an essay or *how to* transfer and assimilate the reading into effective composition” (72). Spending more time in class on active reading practice—instead of discussion of topics about which students are reading—is essential, according to the author. How can writing teachers motivate students to complete reading assignments? Horning echoes Linda B. Nelson’s advice to incentivize reading by “making students’ work with readings count no less than 20% of their course grade” (73). How does reading function for students in a writing course? Again using Jolliffe, Horning defines three common functions of reading: to find content to use in their writing, to imitate modes such as cause-effect or definition, and to integrate into their writing



after processing what they have read. Horning presents strategies that she believes can be helpful for first-year writing and writing across the curriculum. Teachers and students in first-year writing courses “need to understand the [psycholinguistic] nature of reading in both print and digital contexts” (81), students “must be taught specifically and overtly how to do critical reading so they can develop the key skills of critical literacy in all the reading they do” (81), teachers should “model [academic critical literacy] by reading aloud, showing students what they can and should be doing” (82), teachers must “provide focused practice in reading in every assignment they give, building readers’ skills over the course of every semester, through the use of a carefully constructed set of reading guides” (82), and teachers need to provide “opportunities for students to practice reading more actively within their respective disciplines” (84). All teachers share the responsibility of helping students to become better readers and writers, Horning argues, so they can succeed within and beyond academia.

Horning’s discussion of what she calls the “psycholinguistic nature of reading” is especially useful because understanding how “readers rely on letter-sound relationships, sentence structures, and context to get meaning from print, rarely reading every word on a printed page” (81) should influence how we teach students to read effectively. Here the author makes an important link to teaching for transfer: “when readers can [analyze, summarize, evaluate, and synthesize what they read], they should then be able to apply information and ideas from their reading to their own writing, or for other purposes” (82). While she does not expand on how to get students to apply what they learn as readers/writers, Horning references John Bean’s *Engaging Ideas* and Linda B. Nilson’s *Teaching at Its Best* as resources. This article offers valuable strategies for promoting the transfer of learning from a reading-writing-relationship perspective shaped by her intersecting interests in linguistics, rhetoric, and writing across the curriculum as a professor of writing at Oakland University.

Jenson, Jill D., and Paul Treuer. “Defining the E-Portfolio: What It Is and Why It Matters.” *Change*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2014, pp. 50-57.

Although e-portfolios are intended—among other goals—to promote lifelong learning, Jenson and Treuer write, they “find no evidence in the national and international literature that

widespread use of e-portfolios occurs beyond the users' college years" and theorize that the reason for this lack of evidence "is that the purpose of the e-portfolio is poorly understood" (51). According to the co-authors e-portfolios are not simply digital storage containers, tools for assessment, learning platforms, or tools for the career development of students. Jenson and Treuer suggest that "in order for learning to become lifelong" e-portfolios must "become self-directed" (51). They assumed that by making the e-portfolio a requirement for first-year writing their students would see the e-portfolio's value both within college and beyond it, but after reviewing student portfolios Jenson and Treuer realized that assumption was problematic. In reality, the authors report, "students quit using the e-portfolio as soon as the requirements for the first-year writing course were met," students "did not selectively share their e-portfolio elements after careful consideration of audience and purpose," they did not engage in "critical reflection," and students gave no indication that they were using the e-portfolio as a "tool for learning within the confines of the classroom" or "for a lifetime of learning outside the university" (52). In order to reflect critically students must become "deep learners"; such learners "are interested in the academic task and derive enjoyments from carrying it out," they "search for the meaning inherent in the task and personalize it," they find connections between the task and their prior knowledge, and they "theorize about the task" (52). Their analysis suggests that with careful design and implementation e-portfolios can be effective in promoting deep learning. If students are going to "use e-portfolios as the learning tools they were meant to be," Jenson and Treuer argue, students must "*collect* relevant artifacts that document their learning," they need to "*self-regulate* [by becoming] aware of and exercis[ing] behavior that leads to learning," students should "*critically reflect* [by] contextualizing the meaning and significance of their learning in terms of established goals and value systems," they must "*integrate* their learning [by] synthesizing their experiences and transferring them to new situations," and students should "*collaborate* [by] building their existing knowledge and applying it in community with others" (53). Those who use e-portfolios need to teach undergraduates these five skills, according to the co-authors. Jenson and Treuer define e-portfolios as "[tools] for documenting and managing one's own learning over a lifetime in ways

*that foster deep and continuous learning*" (55). This definition should guide our understanding as well as our use of e-portfolios, the co-authors believe.

This article helps me to anticipate some likely problems with the e-portfolio I am developing and gives me some good ideas for promoting e-portfolios. In terms of side-stepping potential issues with e-portfolio use, the authors make clear that simply requiring an e-portfolio and defining its requirements is not enough. I plan to incorporate the "five fundamental learning skills"—collect, self-regulate, critically reflect, integrate, and collaborate—they argue are necessary in order for students to benefit from and realize the full potential of e-portfolios (53). Also, Jenson and Treuer explain that their "first-year writing students joined an e-portfolio community, through which they accessed templates of what to include in their e-portfolios and writing prompts that guided them through critical reflection" (53). Creating such a community for students is important to provide them with resources and support. In addition, to help students see the e-portfolio as more than "just another assignment," Jenson and Treuer offer advice based on their "decades of experience" as researchers as well as practitioners with e-portfolios (54). As their experience shows, "if the true value of the e-portfolio is ever to be realized, students need to be taught how to use it to foster deep, self-directed, lifelong learning" (54). Finally, this article includes a useful Rubric for Measuring e-Portfolio Literacy (56) Jenson and Treuer have implemented at the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) that might be modified for use at JCCC.

Kirkpatrick, Judith, Tanya Renner, Lisa Kanae, and Kelli Goya. "A Value-Driven ePortfolio Journey: *Nā Wa'a*." *Electronic Portfolios 2.0: Emergent Research on Implementation and Impact*. Edited by Darren Cambridge, Barbara Cambridge, and Kathleen Blake Yancey, Stylus, 2009, pp. 97-102.

Four teachers at Kapi'olani Community College collaborated to write this chapter exploring the results of their study focused on e-portfolios designed to integrate cultural and academic values. Using the "voyaging metaphor" of *Nā Wa'a*—meaning "the canoes"—according to the authors "provided a frame for three purposes: (a) to assist students in recording their learning; (b) to connect their academic, career, and personal work with various

Hawaiian values; and (c) to position these works within a stage of growth” (97). To collect data for analysis, the researchers used student scores from the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and student responses to survey questions as well as reflective analyses students wrote and feedback teachers provided to students. Kirkpatrick, Renner, Kanae, and Goyo found that use of the *Nā Wa’a* e-portfolio led to more independent student learning. Based on their study, the co-authors recommend that teachers make e-portfolios an integral part of the content of their courses, have students use a relevant cultural lens (such as the voyager metaphor) to expand and communicate their knowledge as well as promote their development, encourage students to include multimedia artifacts into their e-portfolios, promote peer mentoring among students, and allow students to decide how many artifacts to include in their e-portfolios.

Especially valuable are the co-authors six recommendations, which may serve as best practices for readers who want to use e-portfolios to foster independent learning among students. One recommendation is for students to find a cultural perspective that allows them to make meaning of their experiences. Should teachers choose the cultural perspective for students or leave the decision to students? What cultural perspectives that are more local to the Midwest or Kansas might teachers suggest as potential lenses for framing their e-portfolios? Another thought-provoking recommendation is for teachers to avoid being prescriptive when it comes to the number of student artifacts to be included in their e-portfolios. The co-authors suggest that “students choose how many (or how few) artifacts they choose to upload” or include (102), but how practical is it to leave the number of artifacts open-ended? What happens if students choose too few (one or two) artifacts to showcase their learning or illustrate their progress sufficiently? Assuming the e-portfolio is a course requirement, how can teachers develop appropriate rubrics if they cannot require and enforce a minimum number of artifacts? While I like the idea of giving students as much agency as possible, I prefer to give students a range (e.g. 3-5 artifacts) rather than completely leave these parameters up to students.

Leonard, Rebecca Lorimer, and Rebecca Nowacek. "Transfer and Translingualism." *College English*, vol. 78, no. 3, 2016, pp. 258-264.

In this article Leonard and Nowacek, both writing center directors, highlight where they believe definitions of transfer and translingualism may overlap in significant ways. The co-authors are especially interested in "the ways in which emerging translingual perspectives might inform, as well as be informed by, studies of transfer of learning" (258-259). Connecting translingualism to transfer, Leonard and Nowacek posit, may lead to a reexamination of how researchers identify the transfer of learning and measure it. To illustrate how "a translingual approach" may benefit transfer researchers and scholars, they suggest that "language deviations in writing can be considered not always failure to transfer standard writing knowledge, but instead a norm of language-in-practice, one of its meaning-making functions" (261). Leonard and Nowacek propose that "both transfer and translingualism could consider how the movement suggested by their prefix blurs rather than reinforces boundaries writers are crossing," which would require "research in both areas [to have] a more robust understanding of how writing moves across both time (longitudinal) and space (cross-contextual)" (262). This kind of research, the co-authors suggest, needs to include the diverse experiences of various writers in different classes across the curriculum.

The co-authors raise important questions about how we determine "success" or "failure" in the transfer of writing knowledge, processes, or skills. Leonard and Nowacek ask a series of questions to show the need to broaden our thinking: "But a translingual approach—one emphasizing differences as a locus of meaning—might ask some critical questions of the search for evidence of transfer. Where, for instance, does the evidence of transfer (or zero transfer, or negative transfer) lie? In an instructor's grade? In a writer's retrospective account given to an interviewer with an agenda that may seem more or less transparent to the writer? In analyses of texts guided by the criteria set by instructors and/or researchers?" (261). As the co-authors suggest through asking these questions, we need to think more critically about assumptions we make related to what constitutes "evidence" of transfer as well as how we interpret "successful" transfer.

McCarthy, Lucille Parkinson. "A Stranger in Strange Lands: A College Student Writing across the Curriculum." *Research in the Teaching of English*, vol. 21, no. 3, 1987, pp. 233-265.

McCarthy's article is based on a case study of a student's writing experiences during his first and second years at Loyola College. Working from the perspective that college writing is "a process of assessing and adapting to the requirements in unfamiliar academic settings" (234), McCarthy explains how "[one] student's behavior changed or remained constant across tasks in three classrooms contexts and how those contexts influenced his success" (235). Her research indicates, McCarthy argues, "that learning to write should be seen not only as a developmental process occurring within an individual student, but also as a social process occurring in response to particular situations" (236). McCarthy's conclusions are that the student did not see important similarities among the writing he was being asked to do in all three courses, the student's level of success was influenced by social factors, and the student used a consistent approach in terms of learning what was expected of him in the different writing contexts. Concluding with the larger implications of her case study, the author states that it shows teachers in the disciplines should realize "school writing is not a monolithic activity or global skill," we need to understand that "writing development is—in part, context-dependent," we should "look at what [students] learn from the social contexts [the students' classrooms] provide for writing," and we should "make explicit the interpretive and linguistic conventions in [our discourse] community, stressing that [ours] is one way of looking at reality and not reality itself" (261-262).

McCarthy's article is unique because it is based on her study of one college student in his first-year composition course and two other courses. Because she followed the student throughout multiple semesters of his college experience—and observed him in class in addition to interviewing him and analyzing his writing—the author was able to study closely how the student (Dave) attempted to negotiate writing in different courses. This in-depth study gives me ideas about how to conduct field research with my students (to trace and understand their development as writers, keeping in mind social factors) and shows me the importance of student-teacher interaction and student-peer interaction in promoting successful learning.

Finally, McCarthy's study is important to consider because it questions whether writing transfer occurs for students across courses, so McCarthy (like Russell and Smit) is a skeptic whose findings contrast to those of other authors (like Nowacek and Wells) who are more optimistic.

Miller, Ross, and Wendy Morgaine. "The Benefits of E-portfolios for Students and Faculty in Their Own Words." *Peer Review*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2009, pp. 8-12.

The co-authors are writing from the perspective of e-portfolio advocates who seek to share their research and impressions with other college educators. Miller and Morgaine write that "E-portfolios provide a rich resource for both students and faculty to learn about achievement of important [learning] outcomes over time, make connections among disparate parts of the curriculum, gain insights leading to improvement, and develop identities as learners or as facilitators of learning" (8). In this article the co-authors highlight student and teacher experiences based on reflections they have collected from their Valid Assessment in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project. Drawing on these findings from a variety of institutions using e-portfolios, Miller and Morgaine argue that "Good e-portfolio practice always includes the processes included within the broad concept of metacognition—having students reflect on their work and think about their progress in learning" (9). They emphasize that having students reflect on work they include in their e-portfolios can help to "build learners' personal and academic identities," "facilitate the integration of learning as students connect learning across courses and time," "[foster the development of] self-assessment abilities," and "help students plan their own academic pathways" (10). With carefully-designed e-portfolios, the authors suggest, "Emphasis shifts from delivering content toward coaching and motivating students as they try to solve problems that are of genuine interest to disciplines, professions, or communities being responsible for their own learning" (11).

This insider's look—from the perspective of students and teachers experienced with digital portfolios—is immensely helpful to me. Miller and Morgaine use their own research as representatives of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to help make the case for digital portfolios. Their article shows how students at LaGuardia Community College, the University of Michigan, and Portland State University made similar connections in

terms of how a sequence of reflections integrated into the e-portfolio experience helped them to see the ways different parts of their learning curriculum fit together. Teachers also shared their perspectives on how e-portfolios foster active learning and personal development among their students. While the article includes only selected testimonies from students and teachers who view e-portfolios positively, it offers some evidence to back up their claim that “A well-executed e-portfolio program is an incredible tool for higher education” (8).

Moore, Jessie L. “Mapping the Questions: The State of Writing-Related Transfer Research.”

*Composition Forum*, no. 26, Fall 2012. <http://compositionforum.com/issue/26>.

Accessed 30 Nov. 2017.

“What has rhetoric and composition asked about transfer, and what new questions might guide the field’s exploration of writing-related transfer?,” Moore asks. In response to the first part of the question, she explains how scholars in rhetoric and composition have not reached consensus on whether “transfer” is the appropriate term to represent the discipline’s growing interest in application of writing knowledge and skills from one context to another. The disagreement about terminology, Moore explains, “stems both from the range of foundational theories borrowed from other disciplines and from rhetoric and composition’s early applications of those theories.” Writing scholars also differ in their viewpoints on how writing-related transfer happens and even the extent to which such transfer can happen, according to the author. Another question Moore references involves the role of institutional contexts—and whether institutions structure curricula in ways that encourage or discourage learning transfer. In response to the second part of the question, Moore highlights other areas for further research she believes are needed. These include “studying writing-related transfer at other types of institutions and in other geographic regions,” “recruiting student participants with underrepresented identities,” “continuing to examine the tools students use for transfer and integration,” “examining the overlapping, intersecting, and disparate activity systems that students move among,” and finally “(re)examining students’ intended goals and outcomes.”

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(AAC&U), the Research Seminar on Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer has begun to address these new avenues for research, the article states.

Moore—Director of the Center for Engaged Learning and Associate Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at Elon University—effectively synthesizes writing-related transfer discussions by other scholars to show where there is agreement, disagreement, and opportunity for further research. This article offers readers a relatively comprehensive overview (from 1987 to 2012) of the conversation about transfer of writing knowledge and skills. Finally, the last section of the article titled “Adding Detail and Exploring Uncharted Areas” poses some useful questions for those researching writing-related transfer and seeking to teach for transfer. Moore asks about the ways in which “complementary, parallel, and intersecting activity systems impact students’ shifts among concurrent activity systems, as well as from school to professional activity systems,” whether teachers are able to “integrate more bridges and transitional strategies if they know more about the other disciplines and discourse communities students encounter” in their various roles, and the impact “institutional characteristics” may have in “[shaping] activity systems.” To apply Moore’s questions to my redesigned composition course focused on teaching for transfer, how can I urge students to see connections between the writing they do in my class, in their other classes, and in their professional activities? What do I need to learn further about the other discourse communities and activity systems in which my students participate?

Navarre Cleary, Michelle. “Flowing and Freestyling: Learning from Adult Students about Process Knowledge Transfer.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 64, no. 4, 2013, pp. 661-687.

This article focuses on research the author conducted involving 25 undergraduate adult students as writers throughout their respective college experiences. One relevant finding of previous research, Navarre Cleary suggests, is that “Learners with practice approaching multiple perspectives are better at transfer than those without such experience” (664). Her case studies, Navarre Cleary asserts, “revealed that a sense of academic identity, peer cueing, and analogical reasoning all played significant roles in whether these [two] students transferred

useful process knowledge” (666). She writes, “The two case studies revealed three connections between knowledge, use of analogies, and academic writing” (668). The author compares and contrasts the writing processes of the two students in the case studies: Tiffany and Doppel. Ultimately, Navarre Cleary writes, “These findings suggest that we can be more strategic in helping students . . . develop the flexibility to adapt to new writing challenges” (678). She argues that teachers should “help students [inventory and understand] their processes” as well as “the ways in which they *think* about their processes” (679). Learning how to adapt to new writing situations is crucial for students, the author believes, if they are going to be successful in the transfer of learning.

Navarre Cleary’s article has challenged me to think beyond how teachers can encourage or prompt learning transfer. She has brought to my attention “the value of leveraging not only class-based peer feedback but also the feedback networks students have developed already” (668). Navarre Cleary offers specific examples of students whose friends, family members, or neighbors prompted them to use process knowledge—such as making use of freewriting and revising. Also, I find this advice from Navarre Cleary helpful: “Just as we teach students how to find, select, and use sources for their research, we can teach them how to intentionally seek out, select, and use peer feedback beyond the classroom” (679), given our students’ tendency to only consult one person, if anyone. This is a useful article from Navarre Cleary, a writing coordinator at DePaul University’s School for New Learning, because it focuses on a specific area of expertise—teaching nontraditional and adult learners.

Nelms, Gerald, and Ronda Leathers Dively. “Perceived Roadblocks to Transferring Knowledge from First-Year Composition to Writing Intensive Major Courses: A Pilot Study.” *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 31, no. 1-2, 2007, pp. 214-240.

According to Nelms and Dively, “any successful approach to enhancing the transfer of composition knowledge must involve changes in composition instruction, as well as a pervasive commitment to writing across the curriculum” (214). Their article reports on and interprets findings from their pilot study at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) intended to help students transfer knowledge from first-year composition to other contexts. “Because transfer

occurs over time and across contextual borders that make it difficult to observe within the traditional academic institutional structure,” they explain, “the application of knowledge from first-year composition to non-composition course writing contexts remains largely unexplored” (215). While they believe “teaching to transfer is possible,” Nelms and Dively have conducted their own study in order “to learn more about what might be confounding the far transfer of knowledge and skills introduced in [their first-year writing] courses” (218). They surveyed graduate teaching assistants who are writing instructors and conducted focus groups with other instructors who teach writing-intensive courses in the College of Applied Sciences and Arts at SIUC. Here are key themes that emerged from their pilot study: students tend to compartmentalize knowledge rather than see transferable connections between knowledge in one context and another context, students are able transfer some knowledge from composition (involving the thesis-support relationship, source citation, and textual analysis), students do not have adequate time to focus on writing in courses that relate to their majors, students have little motivation to improve their writing, and students encounter different vocabularies from their composition courses versus other courses across the disciplines. They propose “increased communication between those involving and delivering general composition courses and those involved in designing and delivering writing-intensive courses” in order to “help dismantle roadblocks to the transfer of composition knowledge” (228), ending the article with suggestions on how programs as a whole and teachers as individuals can promote such transfer.

Nelms and Dively make a helpful distinction between learning and transfer. Learning refers to “the durability of knowledge—that is, information stored in memory” while transfer refers to “the application of knowledge acquired in one situation or context to another situation or context” (215). This means that, as the authors suggest, learning must occur before transfer can happen; essentially, transfer is learning put to use. The co-authors make another point that confirms what I have come to suspect—while some argue that “far transfer” is not possible, “writing involves both near and far transfer, relying on both local and general knowledge” (218). I was surprised to learn about the discrepancy between how composition teachers and science teachers defined terms such as “persuasion” and “research” (227). Nelms and Dively make clear that students are less likely to make connections between writing in one

course and another course if they cannot find a common vocabulary. The article's appendix includes questions that may be helpful for surveying and interviewing teachers in order to learn more about the application of writing knowledge, strategies, and skills.

Nowacek, Rebecca S. *Agents of Integration: Understanding Transfer as a Rhetorical Act*, Southern Illinois UP, 2011.

Nowacek's research presented in this book focuses on three professors and eighteen students in an Interdisciplinary Humanities Seminar at Marquette University. Her approach sees "integrative learning as one type of transfer while working to understand the phenomenon of transfer more broadly" and "focuses on how (and why and when) students connect learning from one domain with learning in another domain and how teachers can facilitate such connections" (3). Nowacek argues "that transfer is best understood as an act of recontextualization" (8) rather than simple application of learning from one situation to another. Genres—even more than meta-awareness—influence the transfer of rhetorical knowledge, Nowacek contends. The book examines the findings of her research from the perspective of students (Chapter 2) and instructors (Chapter 3). "Agents of integration," Nowacek suggests, "are individuals actively working to *perceive* as well as to *convey effectively to others* connections between previously distinct contexts" (38). She argues for "a more integrated curriculum" (49) that helps both teachers and students "see and sell connections" (64) between writing in different contexts. In addition, Nowacek suggests that teachers as "handlers" should "consider the possibility of not grading" assignments such as reaction papers—which her research indicates have the greatest potential to foster such interdisciplinary connections" (83-84)—while "*instructors* in their capacity as *audience* can recognize and value connections" (90). Rather than see "good writing" as a universal skill, Nowacek asserts that "Writing knowledge is actually a complex constellation of knowledge and abilities linked together by a writer's understanding of genre" (100). Those intending to teach for transfer must help students see "the rhetorical dimensions of genres" (110) by creating what she calls "push assignments that challenge students' preexisting conceptions of genre and encourage them to probe the relationships between formal conventions and disciplinary

purposes” in order to lead “students [to] actively work as agents [of integration] by creatively recontextualizing strategies and goals and conventions from the genres they already know” (125-126). Finally, in exploring the implications of her research, Nowacek proposes that first-year composition be revised in order to make it more like “an interdisciplinary learning community” (129), individual first-year composition courses include “a series of reflective assignments” to encourage students to become agents of integration (133), “writing program administrators committed to helping tutors develop as handlers will have to help tutors learn . . . to recognize the moments when student writers are groping to make a connection but struggling to see or sell it” (139). New research, according to the author, should include more synchronous—rather than longitudinal—studies of multiple student populations, explore the various identifies of teachers in a variety of interdisciplinary learning communities, investigate diverse types of genre knowledge, explore how students sell connections among writing in different contexts, and clarify the impact of reflection and metacognitive awareness in helping students become agents of integration.

Taking a different approach than most other scholars who rely on longitudinal studies, Nowacek takes what she calls “a synchronous approach” involving “a rich cross-section of student work gathered in three linked courses during a single semester” (3). Nowacek makes an important about the need to reconsider what we think we know about transfer when she writes that based on her experience “students’ efforts to connect knowledge across boundaries are not always recognized or valued, either by their instructors or by the theories that seek to explain these students’ efforts,” and therefore in her view we need “a different theoretical framework” in which to understand transfer (10). Her book offers me new insights, including the fact that “scholarly preoccupation with transfer of knowledge goes back to Aristotle” (13) and Perkins’ and Solomon’s “concepts of low-road and high-road transfer” were a “challenge” or response to “the general/local dichotomy” debate among scholars (15). Nowacek also helps me to think about what types of assignments might work best to encourage transfer or integration/reconceptualization. In order “to help students see and articulate connections across previously unrelated contexts,” she suggests, teachers acting as “handlers” of students in their role as “agents of integration” should “consider the possibility of not grading such

assignments” such as reaction papers and teachers “might frame assignments within genres that do not have such strong disciplinary or academic associations” such as research or source-based term papers (85-86). This book leads me to reconsider my own assumptions and understanding of key terms related to transfer. The notion that students possess content knowledge before they write rather than develop that knowledge through writing “is (wrongly) affirmed by writing programs and ‘value-added’ assessment policies that focus on writing as a portable skill” (100), Nowacek contends. Does my concept that writing-related knowledge is “portable” account for Nowacek’s insight that “transfer as application” is more closely correlated with “low-road transfer” while “transfer as reconstruction” is “a very different process” (117)? I need to work this “reconstruction” concept into my definition and understanding of transfer in order to avoid oversimplifying.

Odom, Mary Lou. “Multiliteracies and Meaning-Making: Writing to Read Across the Curriculum.” *What Is College Reading?*, edited by Alice S. Horning, Deborah-Lee Gollnitz, and Cynthia R. Haller, UP of Colorado, 2017, pp. 255-270.

Odom’s chapter deals with the relationship among reading, writing, and learning. She suggests that, ideally, “college reading” is “a complex, transformational process of meaning-making influenced in subtle or even invisible ways by the social, disciplinary, and technological forces that shape today’s texts and today’s students’ lives” (257). To help understand how recent writing across the curriculum (WAC) efforts can inform efforts to improve college reading, Odom used data from a study focusing on the reading-writing connection in WAC programs. Odom’s analysis of the study indicated that while teachers across the curriculum found their students’ ability to read in critical and reflective ways inadequate, often teachers made two problematic assumptions: “First, these faculty members assumed that requiring students to write about their reading would ensure that they read more and that they read more actively and carefully. Second, these individuals assumed that this writing would automatically show that students were engaged with text in critical and meaningful ways” (260). Which strategies have not worked, Odom asks, and which strategies have worked? Strategies that “involved the use of writing to compel students to read” such as reading quizzes

failed to engage or motivate students to learn, but strategies that allowed students to connect what they were reading and writing about to “the world outside the classroom” such as responding to articles about current events promoted active student learning(261-266). Rather than just assign reading, Odom suggests, college faculty should make sure their students understand the goals for any reading assignment and offer explicit instruction to help guide students who are likely to have trouble with more specialized reading in the disciplines.

This chapter addresses how to promote the transfer of learning among college students as readers and writers. For example, Odom suggests that students who do not develop academic literacy skills are likely to engage in negative transfer as college readers: “When students lack both experience and instruction in the kinds of reading necessary for their success in school, they unsurprisingly fall back on strategies used for the reading they do know how to do – the kind of reading and interacting with non-school texts that is not, on its own, typically adequate for college” (258). After highlighting an example involving a teacher who used informal blog posts to help students make connections to what they were reading in a literature class and develop their critical literacy skills, Odom makes this link to the transfer of learning: “The fact that students are able to transfer initial personal engagement with text to more complex acts such as analysis or synthesis is key for faculty who want or need to assign more academic kinds of writing” (265). She offers a relevant warning about the need to help students link previous reading/writing skills to literacy tasks in college and beyond it. While “Student consumption of many outside-of-school texts has much in common with the transformative, meaning-making work we hope for in college reading and learning,” Odom writes, “the fact that less traditional reading behaviors can prove advantageous for developing competent college readers is helpful only if students ultimately can transfer those skills to their college literacy tasks” (268). Odom, Director of the Writing Center and Associate Professor of English at Kennesaw State University, persuasively argues that college educators must help college students make those connections as readers and writers.

Penny Light, Tracy, Helen L. Chen, and John C. Ittelson. *Documenting Learning with ePortfolios: A Guide for College Instructors*, Jossey-Bass, 2012.

In this book directed to college teachers interested in using e-portfolios, the co-authors write that “integrative learning with ePortfolios encourages students to document their own educational journey over time and across the various domains of their lives as they demonstrate their skills and abilities” (15). However, they warn, teachers must work to integrate e-portfolios into their courses in purposeful ways by “clearly [communicating] to learners why they are using ePortfolios, how the use of ePortfolios will assist them in developing and documenting their own identities, and how that documentation can help them to make connections between the learning that happens in different contexts” (17). Penny Light, Chen, and Ittelson present strategies for addressing eight issues related to the use of learning ePortfolios: making clear the learning outcomes, understanding who the learners are and what they know, getting a sense of who the stakeholders (beyond students) are, creating effective learning activities, integrating different forms of evidence, making use of rubrics for evaluation, considering other ways to use evidence beyond assessment in the educational setting, and determining how to measure success.

Penny Light, Chu, and Ittelson make a strong case for having students inventory, analyze, and reflect on their learning as they develop their e-portfolios. As they explain, “students need to be able to understand where their knowledge comes from and how they have come to know what they know, but also to apply that knowledge in a changing world,” and therefore “Providing students with an opportunity to articulate why it is they know what they know is essential for learning and making connections” (13). To apply this idea in the teaching for transfer composition course I am developing, at the beginning of the course I plan to require students to create an inventory to define the genres they have written and to write a draft of their theory of writing; then, as the course continues, I plan to require students to revise the inventory and theory of writing. The e-portfolio can help students to articulate what they know and can do, how they might apply that learning in other contexts, and what they need to learn further. Penny Light, Chu, and Ittelson introduce a key term that relates to Yancey’s emphasis on reflection. They write, “*Folio thinking* is a reflective practice that situates and guides the effective use of learning portfolios” (10). This book also provides some useful resources including the beginning-middle-end of course reflection prompts (56), the link to e-



portfolio rubrics collected the Association of American Colleges & Universities' VALUE project (<http://aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/integrativelearning.pdf>), strategies for responding to student questions about why they are being required to complete an e-portfolio (71-73), and "Key Features of ePortfolio Tools and Current Practices" (125-135). All three authors of this comprehensive book have expertise in e-portfolio design and implementation.

Perkins, David N., and Gavriel Salomon. "Teaching for Transfer." *Educational Leadership*, vol. 46, no. 1, 1988, pp. 22-32.

According to Perkins and Salomon, "The implicit assumption in education has been that transfer takes care of itself," but "considerable research and everyday experience testify that this Bo Peep theory"—their term for the notion that knowledge or skills learned in one context will automatically transfer to another context—"is inordinately optimistic" (23). Theorizing about why the assumed transfer often does not happen, Perkins and Salomon emphasize what they consider a "surprising" explanation offered by cognitive psychologists—that "there may not be as much to transfer as we think" because "Skill and knowledge are perhaps more specialized [or context-specific] than they look" (24). When transfer occurs, they suggest, it can take one of two primary forms: "To generalize, low road transfer reflects the automatic triggering of well-practiced routines in circumstances where there is considerable perceptual similarity to the original learning context," while "high road transfer depends on deliberate mindful abstraction of skill or knowledge from one context for application in another" (25). Further developing their model of transfer, Perkins and Salomon distinguish "forward-reaching high road transfer" in which a person "learns something and abstracts it in preparation for applications elsewhere" and "backward-reaching high road transfer" in which "one finds oneself in a problem situation, abstracts key characteristics from the situation, and reaches backwards into one's experience for matches" (26). Most transfer that occurs in educational settings, they suggest, is low road transfer. In terms of teaching for transfer, the article presents two strategies: "hugging" refers to teaching in ways that help students see the more overt connections between two contexts or tasks required for low road transfer, while "bridging" refers to teaching in ways that help students engage in the "mindful abstraction"

necessary to achieve high road transfer (28). According to the authors, “bridging and hugging together could do much to foster transfer in instructional settings” (29). Finally, in response to the argument that knowledge and skills are too “local” or context-specific to allow for transfer, the co-authors assert that (a) disciplinary boundaries are unstable or porous enough to allow for a degree of transfer, (b) some thinking strategies transcend such disciplinary boundaries, and (c) some thinking patterns are generalizable.

Perkins and Salomon raise several key questions. How is transfer distinct from ordinary learning? The co-authors explain that “Transfer goes beyond ordinary learning in that the skill or knowledge in question has to travel to a new context,” although they acknowledge “that definition makes for a fuzzy border between transfer and ordinary learning” (22). Others scholars—including King Beach—are not convinced that there is a difference. What is being or can be transferred? While Perkins and Salomon emphasize the transfer of knowledge and skill, they acknowledge that “other things may be transferred as well; for instance, attitudes or cognitive styles” (22). Certainly, attitudes or dispositions—as other scholars such as Dana Lynn Driscoll and Jennifer Wells—should be taken into account. To what extent can we teach for transfer? Using the techniques of “hugging” and “bridging,” Perkins and Salomon believe, can increase the likelihood of teaching for transfer. However, the co-authors tend to overgeneralize when they suggest that “Taken together, the notions of hugging and bridging write a relatively simple recipe for teaching for transfer” (30)—and they use hypothetical examples rather than research-based data to support this claim. More useful are their suggestions that we should concentrate on “teaching students in general how to *learn for transfer*” (30) and that we should promote “synergy of local and more general knowledge” (31) as educators.

Perkins, David N., and Gavriel Salomon. “Transfer of Learning.” *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd ed., 1992, pp. 1-13.

The co-author define what learning transfer is and how to facilitate it in educational settings. “Transfer of learning occurs when learning in one context or with one set of materials impacts on performance in another context or with other related materials” (3), Perkins and

Salomon explain. They define “positive transfer” as a phenomenon that occurs when learning in one context leads to improved performance in another context (3-4) and “high road transfer” as a phenomenon that requires “mindful abstraction from the context of learning or application and a deliberate search for connections” (8). While they suggest that research indicates such transfer often does not occur, the co-authors argue that it is possible to create the conditions that help to encourage these types of transfer. According to Perkins and Salomon, those conditions include the following: “transfer may depend on extensive practice of the performance in question in a variety of context[s],” “[t]ransfer sometimes depends on whether learners have abstracted critical attributes of a situation,” “metacognitive reflection on [the learner’s] thinking processes appears to promote transfer of skills,” “[m]indfulness [or a] generalized state of alertness [related to the learner’s] activities and surroundings” is required, and “Transfer is facilitated when new material is studied in light of previously learned material that serves as an analogy or metaphor” (6-7). Ultimately, Perkins and Salomon argue that carefully-designed educational experiences can promote learning transfer.

“Transfer of Learning” by Perkins and Salomon is a foundational text that defines concepts and terms many of my other sources reference. One of the most helpful points the co-authors make relates to the question of whether “low road transfer” and “high road transfer” are mutually exclusive. They suggest that rather than simply giving students a practice exam (low road) also giving students an opportunity to create an exam-taking strategy based on their previous experience is even more “likely to yield rich transfer” (10). This relates to questions I continued to ask while reading the article: while high road transfer is the ideal, does low road transfer also have value? Should teachers seek to promote both types? Reading what Perkins and Salomon—as experts in educational psychology—have written in “Transfer of Learning” gives me more insight into the ongoing conversation about writing for transfer and teaching for transfer.

Read, Sarah, and Michael J. Michaud. “Writing about Writing and the Multimajor Professional Writing Course.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 66, no. 3, 2015, pp. 427-457.

Read and Michaud are writing to “connect [the] pedagogical dilemma” involving how composition specialists can teach business or professional writing effectively “with two important contemporary discussions in composition studies: the conversation about the pedagogy called writing about writing (WAW) and the conversation about the transferability of rhetorical knowledge from school to work” (428). The co-authors reference the work of Downs and Wardle as they suggest that multimajor professional writing (MMPW) courses should teach students not only how to write but also should focus on writing as their content. “This shift in emphasis,” Read and Michaud argue, “accommodates our increasing awareness that what students take with them across the academic-workplace boundary is less a set of explicitly transferable skills and more a generalized rhetorical capacity that enables them to successfully adapt to new rhetorical situations” (428). Multimajor professional writing courses should move away from simply teaching genres and skills to teaching students how to inquire into professional writing as well as how to problem solve, according to the co-authors. In response to Doug Brent’s “call to develop professional writing pedagogies with an explicit regard for preparing students to become learning transformers of rhetorical knowledge,” Read and Michaud present their writing about writing—professional writing (WAW-PW) pedagogy as “a coherent and viable approach to teaching generalizable rhetorical knowledge that can be transformed across contexts, and workplace contexts, in particular” (429). Such a pedagogy, they contend, encourages reflection by students about how they learn to write and therefore fosters the development of mental habits that enable students to negotiate differences between academic and professional work.

This article emphasizes the transfer of rhetorical knowledge from writing in the classroom to writing in the workplace. Zooming in on their WAW-PW courses at Midwestern University and Eastern College, respectively, helps Read and Michaud to illustrate how those courses work. Students reflections from Read’s course and Michaud’s courses demonstrated some evidence of students being able to think of writing—especially their process of writing—in new ways. Because their WAW-PW courses aim to “promote learning transfer or transformation” by teaching “generalized rhetorical strategies for meeting new and complex writing situations” (454), the pedagogical approach Read and Mischaud describe is applicable to

those of us who wish to redesign our first-year writing courses to encourage these relevant goals. I believe students should be able to make classroom-to-workplace connections. Therefore, asking students to reflect on how they might use what they have learned in composition in their professional lives should be part of my teaching for transfer course.

Reiff, Mary Jo, and Anis Bawarshi. "Tracing Discursive Resources: How Students Use Prior Genre Knowledge to Negotiate New Writing Contexts in First-Year Composition." *Written Communication*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2011, pp. 312-337.

"In order to learn more about how students draw on and make use of their prior discursive resources in [first-year composition]," Reiff and Bawarshi "designed a cross-institutional research study that focused on one significant discursive resource: students' use of prior genre knowledge" (313). The co-authors discuss the results of their study. One of their discoveries was "that this kind of expert-novice relationship [explored by Sommers and Saltz] informs how students make use of their prior genre knowledge" (314). Student surveys, student interviews, and analysis of the syllabi/assignments given to students in their first-year composition course at the University of Tennessee and the University of Washington formed the basis of Reiff's and Bawarshi's research. While students had an extensive knowledge of various genres, the co-authors explain, "students tended not to report drawing on the full range of their genre knowledge when they encountered and performed new writing tasks in [their first-year writing course]" (324). Referencing the work of other scholars including Salomon and Perkins, Reiff and Bawarshi use the terms "boundary crossers" and "boundary guarders" to distinguish between those students who engage in "high-road transfer" and those who engage in "low-road transfer" (325). Students who were able to cross boundaries abstracted from various genres to find and use strategies to help them in more complicated writing tasks, the article suggests. Reiff and Bawarshi emphasize that the ability to cross from one boundary to another "may be a key element of transforming knowledge and learning" (330). Researchers and teachers need to conduct further research to understand the complex factors that may influence the way students draw on and use existing genre knowledge to approach new writing tasks, they conclude.

These are key questions Reiff and Bawarshi ask: “What previous experiences and resources do [first-year composition students] draw on and why? What experiences and resources do they hold onto most persistently, and which do they relinquish more easily, and why?” (313). Part of the answer, for these co-authors, is genre knowledge and related experience with different genres. It seems to me that “macrogenres” such as summaries and evaluations (318) may be particularly transportable across courses and disciplines. Reiff and Bawarshi propose two approaches that may be helpful. First, “when we assign a writing task” they encourage teachers to “first ask students to tell us what they think the task is asking them to do, what it is reminding them of, and what prior resources they feel inclined to draw on in completing the task” as “an important first step in encouraging students to examine and make strategic uses of their prior discursive resources” (332). Second, they urge teachers to “design assignments that invite students to use a wider range of discursive resources” as well as reflect on the extent to which they see themselves “crossing between genres and domains” (332). This echoes the advice others—including Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey—have offered.

Reynolds, Nedra, and Rich Rice. *Portfolio Teaching: A Guide for Instructors*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Bedford, 2006.

Reynolds and Rice present an overview of portfolios—including potential benefits and challenges, different kinds, considerations for planning and implementing, the role of reflection, how to collect and select artifacts for inclusion, and concerns related to assessment—for teachers and writing program administrators. Giving students multiple writing assignments, resisting the urge to grade all individual assignments, and integrating reflection are three recommendations the authors make. They suggest these potential advantages of electronic portfolios: “Portfolios constructed on the Web or posted to the Web can coax students out of writing only for the teacher, and asks writers to consider how they want readers to move through a site” (63). While recognizing how “going electronic can cause problems” related to the logistics of working in digital spaces (4), Reynolds and Rice are proponents of carefully-designed and thoughtfully-implemented portfolios as learning tools.

What the co-authors have to say about electronic portfolios is particularly relevant to my interest in moving from the use of traditional (print) portfolios to the use of digital portfolios. They argue that “Electronic tools . . . resolve many problems inherent in paper portfolios, such as accessibility, scalability, and flexibility” (4). However, they make an important point that teachers and students who are building electronic portfolios “must consider how to guide their readers’ navigation” (5). From a teaching perspective, Reynolds and Rice help me to realize that all of my decisions related to integrating an e-portfolio into my course should be based on making sure my students focus on their writing rather than the technology. This is helpful advice they give: “So that you’re not spending valuable time teaching technology apart from how it relates to writing, it’s wise to have students use tools that are common to the campus or that they routinely use already” (6). At JCCC those available tools include Edublogs by CampusPress and the e-portfolio features related to our new learning management system, Canvas. Finally, I plan to use this book’s advice on designing the “reflective introduction” (38-42) and dealing with the related problems of “glow” (portfolios that begin well but soon lose their initial luster) and “schmooze” (portfolios that seek to flatter the teacher) (60-63).

Robertson, Liane, Kara Taczak, and Kathleen Blake Yancey. “Notes Toward a Theory of Prior Knowledge and Its Role in College Composers’ Transfer of Knowledge and Practice.” *Composition Forum*, no. 26, Fall 2012, <http://compositionforum.com/issue/26>. Accessed 23 Aug. 2017.

Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey are writing to other compositions for a special issue of the *Composition Forum* devoted to the topic of “Writing and Transfer.” The co-authors are especially interested in “how students *make use of* [their] prior knowledge as they find themselves in new rhetorical situations,” the ways in which “students draw on and employ what they already know and can do, and whether such knowledge and practice is efficacious in the new situation or not.” After reviewing the research by scholars in education, psychology, and composition, the co-authors explain that based on that research we know “students actively use their prior knowledge and that some prior knowledge provides help for new writing

situations, while other prior knowledge does not.” Pointing to a problem of “an absence of prior knowledge,” the article suggests that students “enter college with very limited experience with the conceptions and kinds of writing and reading they will engage with during the first year of postsecondary education.” They define three ways students “take up new knowledge.” One way they “call assemblage: by grafting isolated bits of new knowledge onto a continuing schema of old knowledge.” A second way they “call remix: by integrating the new knowledge into the schema of the old.” A third way the authors “call a critical incident—a failure to meet a new task successfully—and use that occasion as a prompt to re-think writing altogether.” Ultimately, they call upon researchers and teachers to find ways to motivate students to identify and fill gaps in their prior knowledge as well as to see critical incidents not as failures but as opportunities to revise their writing knowledge and practice.

This article provides historical context about the evolution of “transfer” research in psychology and education several decades ago to research in composition and rhetoric more recently. In fact, reading Robertson’s, Taczak’s, and Yancey’s article lead me to construct a “Transfer Research Chronology” to visualize the trajectory of transfer-related research from 1900 to present. Another valuable aspect of their article relates to the thorough discussion with examples based on their experience with three students—Eugene, Alice, and Rick—to illustrate three ways of “uptake” by students: “assemblage,” “remix,” and “critical incident.” How representative are these three student experiences, though? Are there other ways for “uptake” or for students to “tap” their prior experience as writers? On a different note, I find it interesting that Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey consistently refer to the transfer of “knowledge and practice” rather than “knowledge and skills.” Is “practice” a more accurate (and/or inclusive) term for me to use than “skills”? Finally, these authors refer to reflection as “a composing process,” which raises other questions. How can we promote reflection as a process students internalize and use in our courses and in other contexts? Is reflection—or should it be considered—a distinct aspect of the writing process (like drafting, revising, and editing)?

Rosinski, Paula. “Students’ Perceptions of the Transfer of Rhetorical Knowledge Between Digital Self-Sponsored Writing and Academic Writing: The Importance of Authentic



Contexts and Reflection.” *Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer*, edited by Chris M. Anson and Jessie L. Moore, UP of Colorado, 2017, pp. 247-271.

Rosinski questions the assumption that self-sponsored, digital writing our students increasingly do—especially via social media—has a negative impact on their literacy. After identifying what she sees as a gap in research addressing “whether or not any kind of writing or rhetorical knowledge transfers between self-sponsored digital writing and academic writing” (248), Rosinski presents the results of her study designed to answer two research questions: “Do students transfer rhetorical strategies . . . between digital self-sponsored and academic writing?” and “Does asking students to engage in reflection about the rhetorical strategies used in both kinds of writing increase their ability to transfer such knowledge?” (249). The author’s study was based on interviews and surveys that asked 10 Elon University students to reflect on their academic writing as well as their self-sponsored (non-academic) writing. Analysis of the interview results, Rosinski writes, indicates “that students gain more experience making rhetorical writing decisions based on audience awareness when they are actually writing for real audiences” (259). Students made more connections to their rhetorical choices as writers when discussing their self-sponsored digital writing compared to when discussing their academic writing. Rosinski explains that her study shows “students understand that the stakes are higher when writing for real people with real informational needs,” and therefore “if we want students to experience and analyze writing purposes in rhetorically complex ways, then we need to create real writing contexts in our classrooms, with real audiences” (262). In order “to encourage the potential transfer of rhetorical strategies between students’ digital self-sponsored and academic writing” (267), she asserts, teachers must challenge students to explore the rhetorical moves they make in their self-sponsored writing and reflect on how to apply those moves when writing for academic purposes.

This article is unique because it examines how students perceive the relationship between self-sponsored digital writing such as Facebook posts and teacher-generated academic writing such as analysis papers. Concerning the transfer of rhetorical writing knowledge and practice, these interview questions from Rosinski are especially useful: “In what ways do you

take your audience into account when you are writing?" (254), "How do you know if your writing for this genre is effective?" (255), "Does the composing technology you use to create this genre impact your writing?" (255), and "Do you see any connections between these two kinds of writing [self-sponsored and academic] in your lives?" (255). Rosinski also provides helpful recommendations for "short, informal and low-stakes" writing activities that may encourage the transfer of writing knowledge from personal contexts to academic contexts, including "[asking] students to alter one of the rhetorical features of a text message conversation (such as changing the audience from a friend to a grandmother, or the occasion from a celebration to a study session)" and "reflect on whether or not their word, style, or content choices were appropriate for a specific audience or context" (267-268). This type of reflective activity Rosinski presents can be valuable in promoting the transfer of learning; furthermore, these kinds of digital self-sponsored writing our students are doing (Facebook posts, email messages, blogs) may be relevant artifacts students can include and reflect on in their learning e-portfolios.

Rounsaville, Angela, Rachel Goldberg, and Anis Bawarshi. "From Incomes to Outcomes: FYW Students' Prior Genre Knowledge, Meta-Cognition, and the Question of Transfer." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2008, pp. 97-112.

Rounsaville, Goldberg, and Bawarshi focus on what they call "an area of research that has seen much less attention from composition scholars: The prior discursive resources students bring to [first-year writing] courses from outside the university setting" (98). The co-authors highlight findings from their research at the University of Tennessee and the University of Washington based on two research questions: "What genres (written, oral, digital) do students know when they arrive in [first-year writing] courses" and "How do students use their prior genre knowledge when writing new genres for [first-year writing] courses?" (99). First-year writing courses "can function as an important bridge course," the co-authors claim, "in which students can develop the meta-cognitive processes that enable them more effectively to transition from context to context by accessing and building on their antecedent knowledge" (99). Analysis of student interviews lead the co-authors to conclude that while their students

possessed “a wealth of genre knowledge” they “tended not to draw on the full range of their discursive resources when confronted with a new writing task in college” (105). They conclude by arguing that “teachers should encourage students to reflect on *how* and *why* students came to perceive the assignment the way they did” and thereby “invite students both to articulate and examine the meta-cognitive processes that guide their discursive choices” (108). Intervening in those processes, the article suggests, can increase the opportunity for high-road transfer.

This article gives me an idea about how to conduct research here at JCCC. Following the approach these authors define, I can first have students complete an interview (answer questions similar to those defined above) and then conduct “discourse-based interviews” (100) or focus groups with students about samples of their writing. Which genres come into play in different contexts (school, work, outside of school and work)? Rounsaville, Goldberg, and Bawarshi reveal that those few genres that “traverse domains” include emails, text messages, personal letters, business letters, PowerPoint presentations, online discussion posts, and freewriting (104-105). Here are some questions the co-authors raise. Are these “communicative genres” (109) the most transportable and, if so, should teachers across the college or university be assigning them more? What are the benefits and drawbacks of emphasizing these genres? I need to think more about which types of genres I should be assigning and prioritizing in order to teach for transfer.

Russell, David. “The Myth of Transience.” *Writing in the Academic Disciplines: A Curricular History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Southern Illinois UP, 2002, pp. 3-34.

In this chapter Russell explains the failures of higher education in the United States to adapt writing instruction to new realities (as writing became more specialized) and examines the implications of those failures. Rather than recognize “the unique written conventions of a profession or discipline,” he writes, our educational system has continued to see writing as “a single, generalizable skill” instead of “a complex and continuously developing response to specialized text-based discourse communities, highly embedded in the differentiated practices of those communities” (5). Two results of this notion that writing is “a generalizable,

elementary skill” were a false dichotomy between content knowledge and written expression as well as an erroneous belief that students did not “learn to write” when in fact, Russell emphasizes, “standards of literacy were no longer stable; they were rising and, more importantly, multiplying” (6). In his discussion of how writing has been taught in higher education, Russell examines questions involving the nature of writing, the acquisition of writing, the nature of discourse community or communities within academia, and the aim of teaching academic writing. Academic disciplines have “the responsibility to articulate” and to “teach their discourse” in systematic way (30), Russell argues, rather than abdicate that responsibility to first-year writing courses.

Because this chapter explores the institutional history of writing instruction in the United States since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “The Myth of Transience” gives readers insight into the decades-long debates about where and how writing should be taught in higher education as well as the extent to which we can teach for transfer. Russell presents a thought-provoking view of the nature of writing and literacy here: “By its very nature [writing] is local, context specific, dependent on a community for its existence and its meaning. *Literacy* is thus a function of the specific community in which certain kinds of reading and writing activities take place” (12). While writing and literacy are linked to specific discourse communities, as Russell emphasizes, others (including Wardle and Tinberg) argue that composition teachers can help students to recognize and adapt to the different expectations for writing in at least those discourse communities related to their majors or areas of study. Of course, no composition course is able to prepare students for every type of writing they may be asked to do in other college courses and in their professional careers. Russell is skeptical about the ability to teach for transfer, given that he sees “writing as a complex rhetorical activity, embedded in the differentiated practices of academic discourse communities” (9) and emphasizes the “competing academic discourses” that exist within colleges and universities (22). Russell, who teaches rhetoric and professional communication at Iowa State University, raises valid questions about whether teaching for transfer is achievable given the increasingly specialized nature of writing in the disciplines.

Salomon, Gavriel, and David N. Perkins. "Rocky Roads to Transfer: Rethinking Mechanism of a Neglected Phenomenon." *Educational Psychologist*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1989, pp. 113-142.

The article's co-authors argue that "a broad-based explanatory perspective on transfer" is necessary "because transfer-related findings . . . are often difficult to interpret and puzzling in light of contradictory findings" by psychological and educational theorists (114). Salomon and Perkins "suggest that the high and low roads and their variants account for the conflicting results on transfer" as well as "allow qualitative predictions for the educational, cultural, and other conditions that foster transfer" (115). High-road transfer requires "mindful abstraction" (124), they explain, while low-road transfer does not. Two types of high-road transfer are "forward-reaching" (thinking about how to apply current learning in a future context) and "backward-reaching" (thinking about how prior learning may help in a present context). Teachers can promote high-road transfer, the co-authors suggest, if they explicitly design their courses to foster it by helping students see relationships between contexts and cueing students to recognize—and reflect on—those relationships.

Most in composition studies who have published on writing transfer and teaching for transfer reference Salomon's and Perkins' ideas, which have provided a theoretical framework for discussions of these topics. In this article the co-authors insist that "transfer" is not the same as "mere learning," arguing that "Identifying a case of transfer requires no more than documenting the side effect of learning something on a different performance or context" (116). Others have challenged this transfer-versus-learning concept, and I have trouble with Salomon's and Perkins' use of the term "side effect" here. Isn't the most valuable type of transfer—"high road"—supposed to require "mindful abstraction," which suggests that it is intentional rather than unintentional (as the term "side effect" indicates)? However, I appreciate the co-authors' response to the question of whether "high-road" and "low-road" transfer are mutually exclusive. "Both roads can be traveled at once—one can certainly both reflect on a behavior and practice it" (129), they write. Salomon and Perkins are right; both forms of transfer can happen at the same time, but it is in our best interest as teachers to encourage students to move from low-road to high-road learning transfer.

Smit, David W. "Transfer." *The End of Composition Studies*, Southern Illinois UP, 2004, pp. 119-134.

After stating that the available research "suggests that learners do not necessarily transfer the kinds of knowledge and skills they have learned previously to new tasks," in this chapter from his book Smit argues that "The only way teachers can help students with the process of transfer is to help them see the similarities between what they have learned before and what they need to do in new contexts" (119). He offers this challenge to composition researchers and teachers: "If we want to promote the transfer of certain kinds of writing abilities from one class to another or one context to another, then we are going to have to find the means to institutionalize instruction in the similarities between the way writing is done in a variety of contexts" (120). Using the analogy of teaching a person to use a ball, Smit explains that learners may not be able to generalize skills from one activity system (such as dribbling a soccer ball with the feet) to another activity system (such as dribbling a basketball with the hands). "In [David] Russell's terms," Smit states, "learning to write is a matter of learning how to use similar tools, such as language, discourse conventions, composing strategies, and problem-solving techniques in radically different contexts" (121). He uses a thought experiment to illustrate the difficulty in determining "just what kind of evidence would demonstrate sufficiently whether a person is capable of transferring certain kinds of knowledge and ability from one situation to another" (133). Ultimately, Smit suggests, "the most effective pedagogical methods for teaching writing may be those that immerse novices in particular social contexts, give them the opportunity to use writing to accomplish very specific tasks in those contexts, and promote a sense of how what they are doing has been shaped by what they have learned before and how it might be used in different contexts in the future" (134). Smit questions whether there are enough similarities among different activity systems to make teaching for transfer viable, although he does not completely discount the possibility of helping students apply writing knowledge from one situation to another.

David Smit, director of Kansas State University's Expository Writing Program, makes a compelling case that just because the potential for transfer is there does not mean that transfer

can or will happen. While “what the writer knows or is able to do is something that can transfer from one situation to the next,” he writes, it is also true that “what the writer knows or is able to do is very local and context-dependent and will not transfer to another situation” (122). Another memorable aspect of the chapter relates to Smit’s example of the “five-paragraph theme,” which he suggests may be of some value to a student writer in a previous context such as an introductory writing course but may not transfer successfully as a “strategy” in other contexts such as writing an opinion article for a college newspaper (124). Finally, his “bottom line” message that “We get what we teach for” is instructive because it means “if we want to help students to transfer what they have learned, we must teach them how to do so” (134).

Soliday, Mary. *Everyday Genres: Writing Assignments Across the Disciplines*, Southern Illinois UP, 2011.

Soliday argues that genre “is a social practice,” rather than just a set of conventions, which for her means “readers and writers make everyday genres interactively” (3). Given that she “define[s] *situation* more broadly to include the expectations of both immediate and more distant groups” and that she “assume[s] writers do (or could) apply some general writing strategies to local situations,” Soliday explains, by implication “writing ability may extend and thus be taught overtly to a certain extent across contexts” (8). However, Soliday believes “that what matters is less the amount of overt instruction and more how well professors *contextualize* genres in their classes, aligning the genre’s motive with course material, which might include explicit discussions of a field’s rhetoric” (72). Three research questions guided Soliday’s study, she explains: the first involved the language students from various disciplines use to discuss how learning course content relates to writing; the second dealt with the language teachers use to discuss and assess the disciplinary writing students do; the third question focused on determining the qualities and characteristics of effective writing assignments to share with faculty members across the disciplines. Based on her research Soliday believes teachers across the curriculum should ask students to complete writing assignments that reflect authentic genres, help students learn how to write those genres by

linking invention strategies to the writing tasks (so that students formulate ideas as they gather information or do research), and work collaboratively to strengthen their ability to teach genres by having conversations about rhetoric with teachers in other fields.

This book effectively illustrates the social dimensions of writing genres as well as how teachers should teach genres. Soliday's argument that teachers across the curriculum should have their students write "wild genres"—those which are more authentic than the "domesticated genres" we may develop within an academic setting but often seem fake—is persuasive. As she explains after exploring what distinguishes more successful from less successful writing assignments in the disciplinary courses she researched, "By studying how genres behave in the wild, teachers can craft prompts that invoke the situations of their use, which in turn will help writers to gain a sense of typical speech, imagine their roles, and select their angle of vision" (68). Multiple examples from her research as a WAC program director show how teachers at City College of New York have designed writing prompts and related activities or process steps that aid students in writing genres successfully. Soliday's book also includes an appendix for each of the six academic areas (ranging from Biology to Early Childhood Development to Music Appreciation) on which her research is based; these appendices offer helpful examples of good writing assignments, supporting activities for those assignments, and rubrics for the writing assignments.

Sommers, Nancy, and Laura Salt. "The Novice as Expert: Writing the Freshman Year." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2004, pp. 124-149.

To help explain the rationale for their longitudinal study of first-year writers at Harvard University, Sommers and Salt argue that "what is missing from so many discussions about college writing is the experience of students" (125). Their study of 422 Harvard first-year students included surveys, interviews, analysis of student writing, and focused in particular on the language students use when they discuss writing. Summarizing their major findings, the co-authors write: "We learn . . . that freshmen who see themselves as novices are most capable of learning new skills; and students who see writing as something more than an assignment, who write about something that matters to them, are best able to sustain an interest in academic



writing throughout their undergraduate careers” (127). Sommers and Saltz call attention to “the paradox of being a freshman writer, of writing simultaneously as a novice and an expert” (132). The best courses, they argue, are those in which students “are urged to trust their own intuitions, writing their way *into* expertise about something that matters to them” (139). Giving students more autonomy in choosing what they write about and paying more attention to how they describe or theorize writing, Sommers and Saltz emphasize, are important.

This statement from the article has important implications for efforts to teach for transfer: “we were genuinely surprised that students across disciplines and in varying course sizes use similar language when talking about the role of writing freshman year” (129). To me this suggests that a common language for thinking about and understanding writing—which is necessary in order for successful transfer of learning—is possible. Another valuable finding from Sommers and Saltz based on their research as Harvard professors is that students in the study also were able to make “connections between writing and learning” (130). This “pull and push of forces” is interesting, too, from a transfer perspective: “Students are pushed to practice the new conventions of college writing” while “at the same time, they are pulled by the familiarity of their high default mode, especially . . . when the uncertainty of new materials and methodologies looms large” (133). Does the “pull” back to the familiar encourage or discourage positive transfer? Are students equipped to apply and supplement what they have learned as writers in high school to the work they do as writers in college? The article indirectly addresses such a concern by presenting this finding: “those freshmen who cling to their old habits and who resent the uncertainty and humility of being a novice have a more difficult time adjusting to the demands of college writing” (134). How can teachers help students make the adjustment by encouraging learning transfer? Their idea that college writers must make “the paradigm shift” between “[seeing] writing as a matter of mechanics or a series of isolated exercises” and “[seeing] the ways writing can serve them as a medium in which to explore their own interests” (140) helps to answer my question. Finally, Sommers’ and Saltz’s observation that there are often “gaps between what a student knows about writing and what the student can actually do” as a writer (144) resonates with me as someone exploring how to promote learning transfer.

Teich, Nathaniel. "Transfer of Writing Skills: Implications of the Theory of Lateral and Vertical Transfer." *Written Communication*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1987, pp. 193-208.

Building on the work of Robert M. Gagné, Teich argues that "transfer, or generalization of knowledge . . . is the same enabling aim of truly humanistic education: not just mastering discursive information, but also developing abilities to solve new and unforeseen problems" (193-194). According to Teich, "two domains of knowledge must be operational simultaneously to perform the act of writing," including "the specific content of the subject matter" and "the rhetorical and compositional skills and schemata for various modes of written communication" (194). Teaching composition, Teich argues, involves both lateral transfer (which involves lower level skills such as constructing grammatically-correct sentences) and vertical transfer (which involves higher level skills such as choosing language appropriate for the target audience). "The vertical transfer of writing skills is situational—a function of the context and the content of a specific rhetorical situation," he writes, "Therefore, we should give students opportunities to perform writing as a fully situational activity" (198). Writing assignments in Teich's view should involve authentic writing situations—such as those students are likely to encounter outside of academia—and should be meaningful to students personally.

Teich's correlation between the transfer of learning and problem-solving is important because, as other writers (such as John Bean and Alice Horning) have argued, framing assignments for students as problems they are interested in solving makes learners more likely to achieve successful transfer. Another valuable contribution from Teich is his detailed exploration of the relationship between lateral and vertical transfer. On a related note, he makes a valid case that "Getting students to increase their proficiency in the vertical transfer of writing skills is the appropriate goal for writing instruction" and "teachers cannot expect to produce vertical transfer if they teach exercises that stress competence in isolated mechanical skills or empty forms (like the five-paragraph essay) and other structural patterns (like the infamous modes and types according to which most composition texts are organized)" (204). Lateral transfer of lower level writing skills is important, but vertical transfer of higher level writing skills is crucial if we want to help students become flexible, effective writers.

Thaiss, Chris, and Susan McLeod. "The Pedagogy of Writing in the Disciplines and Across the Curriculum." *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Oxford UP, 2014. pp. 283-300.

After discussing the history of WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum) and WID (Writing in Disciplines), Thaiss and McLeod explain that "Most of us who have been involved in WAC programs from the beginning [forty years ago] see Writing to Learn and Writing to Communicate as two complementary, even synergistic, approaches to Writing Across the Curriculum" (285). The co-authors emphasize the need for collaboration between composition teachers and teachers in other disciplines: "For WAC/WID pedagogy to work in a first-year writing class, teachers must be aware of ways in which student writing and learning are happening in the rest of the institution" (287). There are "five interrelated influences," Thaiss and McLeod explain, that are likely to "transform the teaching of writing—both across disciplines and in the composition class" (288). Included in these influences are the way changes in technology (such as web forums and blogs) redefine WAC/WID, the increase in the number of students and teachers who are multilingual, the impact of international teaching programs on the way people in the United States teach, the effort to prepare students for writing outside of college (through vehicles such as portfolios and literacy autobiographies intended to promote transfer), and the trend toward more "writing intensive" courses/curricular. The chapter ends by considering future implications such as how social media, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), and transnational/translingual students may impact WAC and WID pedagogies.

Thaiss and McLeod make an important connection to the focus of my research project here: "Writing to Learn pedagogy encourages teachers to use writing as a tool for learning as well as a test for learning" (285). For me, writing-to-learn is integral to writing for transfer and teaching for transfer. This chapter makes a compelling case for seeing (and designing) composition as part of the larger college or university—"open[ing] up the self-contained writing class as a portal to becoming more aware of the [institution] and its diverse learning cultures" (294). While the chapter has educated me about past and recent developments that

relate to first-year writing pedagogies, I am examining the WAC Clearinghouse (<http://www.colostate.edu>) to find other potential resources that may help me understand ways to teach for transfer.

Thaiss, Chris, and Terry Myers Zawacki. "Implications for Teaching and Program Building." *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines: Research on the Academic Writing Life*, Heinemann/Boynton/Cook, 2006, pp. 136-170.

In this chapter Thaiss and Zawacki present conclusions based on their research and related approaches for classroom teaching and program development. A key finding from their research—including faculty interviews—is that “good writing, whether it adheres to established conventions or takes risks with form and structure, grows out of a writer’s sense that the work he or she is doing matters, both professionally and personally” (136). The co-authors define five contexts that teachers need to consider when designing, responding to, and evaluating a writing assignment: academic, disciplinary, subdisciplinary, local/institutional, idiosyncratic/personal (138). In order to mature as academic writers, students need guided practice from teachers across the disciplines in different assignments, Thaiss and Zawacki suggest, but they also need “regular opportunity and encouragement to reflect in writing on the connections and distinctions among those many experiences” (140). The article presents twelve practices directed to teachers: (a) define expectations linked to one or more relevant contexts, (b) reflect on development as a teacher/writer/scholar, (c) give students context-based feedback on the writing they do, (d) help students find motivation by identifying what they care about most in the disciplines, (e) provide opportunities for student reflection on writing growth within and beyond college, (f) encourage students to inquire into how to think and write in college and workplace environments, (g) help students understand principles shared by different disciplines, (h) participate in teacher workshops, (i) use group assessment of sample writing to promote faculty development and discuss “good writing,” (j) collaborate with other teachers to discuss writing expectations in relation to the five contexts, (k) work together to generate strategies for helping student find personal motivation, and (l) align the goals of composition courses with the goals of major courses. The article ends with a discussion of three college

writing programs—one that sees composition as teaching academic skills that are generic (such as a “college writing” course), a second interdisciplinary approach in which composition is focused on writing in the disciplines (such as a composition course for students in a nursing program), and a third approach in which composition is independent of writing in the disciplines (such as service-learning course)—and suggestions for future research.

Thaiss and Zawacki ask thought-provoking questions and offer potential answers for those creating or revising programs that involve writing. “How can we teachers expect students to share our complicated sense of expectations for writing,” they write, “when we have not articulated them ourselves?” (139). It is true that if we want students to be successful writers we must make our expectations clear. Furthermore, here the co-authors include questions that students need to ask and answer: “[What] do these assignments in major courses have in common? What principles lie at the heart of my major? How can I find a place for my goals in that structure? What other modes of inquiry attract me, and can I borrow from different fields to achieve my goals?” (140). These questions emphasize students finding and making use of connections they see between different writing assignments as well as their own relationship to the writing they are doing. Thaiss and Zawacki also have some useful ideas—including questions and strategies to promote writing across the curriculum as well as to foster conversations among faculty members about writing—such as writing guides, examples of teacher comments on student assignments, and workshops. The co-authors argue that electronic portfolios can be an effective tool for fostering the growth of student writers because such tools “allow students to create a dynamic portrait of themselves as writers in college and to reflect not only on the writing they have included but also on the format itself as a vehicle for conveying their hypertextual identity” (152). Thaiss’ and Zawacki’s article is valuable because of the twelve practices they elaborate on as well as the examples they offer based on their work at George Mason University for how to apply those approaches as part of an effort to promote student writing development and collaboration among college teachers.

Tinberg, Howard. "Reconsidering Transfer Knowledge at the Community College: Challenges and Opportunities." *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*. vol. 43, no. 1, 2015, pp. 7-31.

After he provides historical context about the evolving and "complex set of purposes" of "the required first-year composition course" (7), Tinberg argues that "When one factors in the call to prepare students for college *and* career—as one must when teaching at the community college—then the matter of transfer acquires an additional urgency" in that "the required first-year composition course should provide knowledge that is portable not only throughout the curriculum but to the complex workplace of the twenty-first century" (8). The available research shows that "metacognition [is] a foundational step to transfer" and teachers "need to be cognizant themselves of what they and their colleagues value in student writing" (9), according to Tinberg. His article presents the findings of his research involving students at Bristol Community College after they completed their first-year writing course. Concerning the implication of his research, Tinberg asserts that "teaching to transfer is in [two-year college] students' best interest" but "the conditions for promoting such teaching and learning . . . are not optimal" (27). Two-year college teachers should invest the time and energy to explore how to promote knowledge transfer across disciplines, according to Tinberg, but teachers also need the institutional support to acquire the training required.

This article's findings based on research are especially interesting because Tinberg's community college students closely resemble my students at JCCC. Based on his survey of 110, Tinberg found that a large majority of students (over 90%) agreed that the first-year writing course prepared them for later coursework, their post-composition coursework required some form of writing, they acquired some form of additional knowledge about writing in this coursework, they noticed differences between writing in one subject versus another subject, and they believe writing play an important role in their career (12-15). One finding from his interviews with faculty members in four content areas, however, was that few of those interviewed were aware of the knowledge or skills from first-year writing courses that might be useful in their own courses. "The barrier between those who teach [the first-year writing course] and other colleagues," suggests Tinberg," would seem to complicate attempts to ease

students' transfer across subject domains" (17). I think Tinberg helps to make the case for collaboration among faculty members across the college if we want to promote the learning transfer. However, I need to give more thought to the distinction Tinberg makes between "teaching to transfer" and "teaching for transfer"—the first of which he suggests "explicitly [spells] out key concepts to be applied or repurposed later in the curriculum" (22).

Tinberg, Howard. "Teaching for Transfer: A Passport for Writing in New Contexts." *Peer Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2017, pp. 17-20.

Working from the premise that the first-year writing course should help students get ready for writing in college and in their professions, Tinberg proposes that in the course "asking students to theorize about habits of mind that will help them articulate and apply concepts critical to become successful writers . . . might serve as a 'passport' for students as they move their writing into new contexts" (17). Tinberg challenges the notion that writing courses at community college should be skill-based. "[T]he 'skill and drill' method of writing instruction has not translated into improved course completion or an increase in retention beyond the required writing course," he claims, "Nor has it promoted the habits of mind—such as metacognition, which many say is crucial to knowledge transfer—that our students will likely need to become thoughtful and creative problem-solvers in class and beyond" (17). Tinberg explains how he has changed the way he teaches first-year writing students in order to place more emphasis on reflection about genres, rather than just experience with writing in different genres. Referencing the work of transfer scholars (Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, Kara Taczak, Linda Adler-Kassler, and Elizabeth Wardle), Tinberg suggests that his major take-away relates to the importance of teaching metacognition: "If students are to take what they've learned in English to other writing situations, they will at the very least need to be aware of their own writing habits and ways of thinking" (18). Tinberg describes how he is using the teaching for transfer (TFT) curriculum developed by Yancey, Robertson, and Taczaks to promote metacognition among his writing students using research-based and reflection-based assignments throughout the course. "In order to take what they've learned in the course and apply it to other writing situations," he concludes, "students must not only adopt a

metacognitive habit of mind, they must also have a portable writing theory—their passport to the writing curriculum” (20) that can serve them in school and in the workplace.

Tinberg, Professor of English at Bristol Community College, offers valuable insights as a teacher and scholar at the two-year college. Especially interesting for me is Tinberg’s explanation of how he is modifying his teaching to promote the transfer of knowledge and writing abilities by asking his students to develop and apply a theory of writing. I plan to use some of Tinberg’s questions to have my students reflect on the nature of writing through blog posts: “What are the definitions, ideas, thoughts, expressions that you associate with writing?,” “What defines successful writing for you?,” “What type of writer to you see yourself as, and why?” (19). Also, I want to adapt these questions from Tinberg to promote metacognition among my students about their drafts-in-progress: “Did this assignment remind you of any writing you’ve done previously? Please describe that work” and “What kinds of knowledge [and/or] writing skills did you draw upon to produce this draft? Please begin to use of the key terms that have begun to form the basis of your theory of writing. For example, did you draw upon your understanding of audience awareness or genre? How so?” (18). Tinberg’s article helps those of us who are interested in writing and teaching for transfer to find specific assignments as well as sets of questions to revising our courses.

Tinberg, Howard, and Jean-Paul Nadeau. “Implications for Teaching and Research.” *The Community College Writer: Exceeding Expectations*, Southern Illinois UP, 2010, pp. 115-132.

In the final chapter of their book, Tinberg and Nadeau examine the larger implications of their study focused on how first-semester students at Bristol Community College navigate writing in their first semester. One finding based on the authors’ review of student portfolios was that most of the writing students do in their first semester “occurs in the required English courses only” (115). Another was that “the writing done in English courses favors the essay over other forms of composition—a genre that, for all intents and purposes, lives mostly in the classroom and not in the workplace” (115). Tinberg and Nadeau link their study’s findings to the transfer of writing knowledge when they “conclude that what David Russell calls the ‘myth of transience’ is alive and well at Bristol: in other words, the idea that writing instruction in an



English course transfers easily to writing done in any course” (115). Emphasizing the role of carefully-designed and engaging writing assignments, the co-authors present six guidelines for community college teachers: give students examples to illustrate successful writing in the genre(s) being assigned, define the criteria for completing the writing task successfully, guide students with processes that help them write effectively, provide scaffolding to make challenging writing tasks more accessible, offer feedback linked to the defined criteria, and build multiple drafts into the writing process. More research focused on “studying community college writers over time and in context,” they argue, is needed (130).

Near the end of the chapter, the co-authors offer an interesting discussion related to unintended consequences of the study for their teaching. Tinberg explains that while he believes “writing instruction is a shared responsibility of all in the college who attend to student learning and development,” the study has revealed “that the most intense conversation about writing continues to take place in the required writing course,” and therefore he wonders whether he “should be preparing students to write and think in ways that are transferable to other academic subjects” and beyond or instead “should be preparing students for the intense work of analysis, synthesis, and argumentation, which conventionally form the backbone of academic discourse” (127-128). As the last section of the article suggests when Tinberg and Nadeau write that their study shows “the work expected” by teachers across the curriculum “may be both academic- and career-relevant” (132), these approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Nadeau discusses how the study has helped him to avoid “making false assumptions about what [his] students already know and expect,” focusing instead on developing “a common language with which to analyze their writing” and shaping his comments on student writing “to encourage more decision making on the part of the writer” (129-130). This relates directly to Tinberg’s and Nadeau’s call for more research emphasizing college writers’ “development, particularly in the way they respond to faculty expectations and the various obstacles confronting” students within their writing courses and other courses (130). How can we promote our students’ writing development through the assignments we have them do, through the written feedback we give them, and through our coordination with their other teachers? Tinberg and Nadeau use their research in working with students inside

the writing classroom and the writing center to challenge readers to continue exploring such important issues.

Wardle, Elizabeth. "'Mutt Genres' and the Goal of FYC: Can We Help Students Write the Genres of the University?" *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2009, pp. 765-789.

Teaching first-year composition "as a general writing skills course," Wardle argues, rests of the questionable assumption "that students . . . can be taught ways of writing (genre and genre knowledge) that they can transfer to the writing they do in other courses across the university" (766). Compositions should "seriously re-examine what our cornerstone course can do," she argues, given "the difficulties of teaching genres out of context" (767). After providing an overview of scholarship illustrating the problem of transfer related to first-year composition, Wardle offers this conditional statement: "Teaching genres out of context is difficult, though there may be some value in teaching genre forms *if* we know what students will be writing later and *if* we can discern what aspects of what genres to teach about and *if* we can find methods for helping students apply those lessons elsewhere in meaningful ways" (771). The article presents and interprets Wardle's research based on the experiences of students and teachers in first-year composition courses designed to be part of learning communities. One finding from Wardle and her research team was that many teachers assigned "mutt genres," ones that "mimic genres that mediate activities in other activity systems, but within [first-year composition] systems their purposes and audiences are vague or even contradictory" (774). Another finding Wardle highlights is that students interviewed or surveyed for her study "did not see any connection between what they were asked to write in FYC and what they would write in other courses later (or even during the same semester)" and students often confused purpose with genre (776-777). To conclude, Wardle offers two recommendations: changing the first-year composition course's content is necessary so that writing assignments reflect the genres students typically write in other disciplines, and making the study of writing itself the focus of the course. This writing-about-writing course with "Writing research as course content lends itself to self-reflection, abstraction of general principles about writing (potentially

academic writing specifically), and mindfulness about writing practices,” and therefore, Wardle suggests, “in theory at least, such a course is set up to teach for transfer” (785).

These questions Wardle asks are directly relevant to the transfer of writing knowledge: “What general knowledge can we teach students about academic genres that will help them write in later courses? And how can we ensure that students will transfer that general knowledge—at all and in helpful ways?” (769). Wardle’s concept of “mutt genres”—which she defines as “genres that do not respond to rhetorical situations requiring communication in order to accomplish a purpose that is meaningful to the author” (777)—is useful as I think about what genres to teach as well as which types of writing to have students include in their learning e-portfolios. Are the writing assignments I ask students to complete “exclusive to [my first-year writing course]” (778)? Do my assignments reflect actual genres that students are—or will be—asked to write? Particularly interesting is Wardle’s example of a composition teacher working with a biology colleague as part of a learning community, Karen, who found that even after extensive efforts to help her biology students write authentic biology genres she was in large part unable to bridge the gap between one activity system (writing for first-year composition) and another (writing for biology). This is just one example that may not be representative, but it calls into question whether learning communities are effective in helping to foster the transfer of learning from a composition course to another course. Writing from the perspective of a writing teacher and administrator at the University of Central Florida, Wardle makes a thought-provoking case for the need to revisit our basic assumptions about what a first-year writing course can and should do.

Wardle, Elizabeth. “Understanding ‘Transfer’ from FYC: Preliminary Results of a Longitudinal Study.” *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 31, no. 1-2, 2007, pp. 65-85.

Wardle urges readers who are involved in teaching composition and especially those working in writing program administration to read the published research and conduct new research on the transfer of learning. Offering a review of what the term “transfer” means, Wardle writes that “classical cognitive conceptions . . . theorize transfer as the transition of knowledge used in one task to solve another task” while individual/dispositional concepts

“focus on teaching learners to be reflective” and she explains that there are “three context-focused conceptions of transfer—situated, sociocultural, and activity-based” (66-67). Knowing these different theoretical approaches is important because “researchers must determine what lens they will use to design studies and determine results” (69). Wardle also offers this warning: “if we look for but do not find direct evidence that students use specific previously-learned skills [such as revision] in new situations, we cannot necessarily assume that students did not learn them, have not used them, or will not use them in the future” (69). The results of her research involving seven students writing for different courses across the University of Dayton, according to Wardle, revealed that “Most importantly, students were able to engage in meta-discourse about university writing in general and their own writing in particular” by demonstrating “meta-awareness about language use”(73).

Wardle echoes some of my concerns about the limitations of using the term “transfer” when she writes that “we should attempt to account for the ways in which knowledge and skills are *transformed* across contexts; otherwise, we risk overlooking manifestations of skills that have been adapted to meet the needs of a new activity system” (69). The term “transfer” perhaps should be replaced with “transformation” or “application” or “generalization” (which, as Wardle points out, is favored by King Beach). She also underscores another concern: if we “teach for transfer” in first-year composition courses, to what extent are students going to be challenged academically in their subsequent college courses in ways that require them use what they have learned in those writing courses? Just because college students can “transfer” writing knowledge and skills, as Wardle points out, does not mean they will do so. Her article shows me the importance of students being able to “*perceive a need* to adopt or adapt [their] writing behaviors [from first-year writing for] other courses” (76), the need to make writing assignments “engaging *and* challenging” (79), the importance of multiple “opportunities for feedback” from teachers (80), and the key role that joining the academic conversations related to their chosen disciplines plays (81).

Wells, Jennifer. “They Can Get There from Here: Teaching for Transfer through a ‘Writing about Writing’ Course.” *English Journal*, vol. 101, no. 2, Nov. 2011, pp. 57-63.

After defining “knowledge transfer” as “[t]he process learners use to take what they have learned in one context and apply it to another,” Wells explains her effort to “teach for transfer [so that her students] could apply their literacy skills to fulfill their own purposes, in academia and beyond” (57). She refers to the distinction David N. Perkins and Gavriel Salomon make between “low road transfer” and “high road transfer,” emphasizing the importance of “Mindful abstraction,” which “requires learners to be metacognitive, to be actively thinking about their learning, as well as to be looking for underlying principles that can connect two seemingly different activities” (57-58). Wells highlights the aspects of the writing about writing (WAW) curriculum of the most value to her students. Her secondary-level English course, titled Writing Studies, began with “a seemingly simple question, ‘What *is* good writing?’,” which involved an ongoing discussion about elements of the writing situation: “purpose, audience, genre, stance, and design/media” (58). After composing short texts for different writing situations (from letters to the editor to haikus), her students completed a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) project—which Wells explains emphasized studying genres as well as learning related discourse communities. The point of having students research ways of reading and writing in disciplines that interested them, she explains, was to help them “achieve high road transfer . . . by developing a new skill with the knowledge of where or how they might apply it in the future” (59). Teaching for transfer, Wells suggests, is achievable through the kind of writing about writing (WAW) curriculum she has tested.

Wells, previously a high school reading and writing specialist and currently Florida State University’s Reading-Writing Center Director, offers a unique perspective on teaching for transfer. The Writing in the Disciplines project she describes is especially useful because many community college students are exploring majors and related professional fields. “What skills do you think you will need to have or learn to be successful in writing in your potential major?” and “What skills do you think you will need to have or learn to be successful in reading in your potential major” (60) are valuable questions for our students to answer. Having students write “weekly reflection blogs” to record their “questions” based on research they conduct (61), an approach Wells recommends, is also a good way to promote learning transfer. Although her article does not include empirical data for the more optimistic viewpoint on the prospect of

teaching for transfer Wells presents, it does include some concrete strategies that Wells shows have worked with her students.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "Digitized Student Portfolios." *Electronic Portfolios: Emerging Practices in Student, Faculty, and Institutional Learning*, edited by Barbara Cambridge, American Association of Higher Education, 2011, pp. 15-30.

After reviewing the core processes and uses of traditional (print) portfolios, Yancey offers this definition: "Created by the three principal activities of collection, selection, and reflection, student portfolios can be succinctly defined as collections of work selected from a larger archive of work upon which the student has reflected" (15-16). No matter the form the portfolio takes, Yancey explains, students—not teachers or administrators—should take the lead in keeping track of and making sense of what students learn. Two varieties of portfolios she discusses are classroom portfolios (focusing on student work in one class) and program portfolios (expanding to work from multiple classes and/or work outside the classroom). "Like their paper counterparts, electronic portfolios are governed by purpose and audience," writes Yancey, but a major distinction involves "the role that interactivity plays in students' digital portfolios, the interactivity of both the digital medium and of social action" (20). In terms of planning to design and implement electronic portfolios, Yancey addresses "six critical issues" that need attention: "identifying the 'place' where the portfolio where be accessed," "exploiting appropriately the potential of the electronic environment," "deciding how much technological skill will be required of students and faculty and what, if any, pedagogical changes will be entailed," "considering the role, if any, that design [such as related to interactivity] will play," "deciding when faculty will read and review portfolios—and why," and "defining options as to the 'life cycle' of the electronic portfolio" (24-25). Those using digital portfolios with their students must work to resolve these issues, Yancey emphasizes.

As someone who is in the process of migrating from a print to a digital portfolio model, I find Yancey's article instructive and thought-provoking. Yancey, a Professor of English and the Director of the Graduate Program in Rhetoric and Composition at Florida State University, shares her expertise as well as the relevant experience of other faculty members who

understand the potential benefits and pitfalls of digital portfolios. These are key questions her article helps me to ask and answer: “What do we mean by the expression *electronic portfolio*? Is it simply a digitized version of the more familiar print portfolio? Or is it something completely different? Why are students, faculty, and institutions so interested in electronic portfolios?” (16). After reading Yancey’s article, I am more aware of the need to think about the “interactivity” of e-portfolios and related concerns. Now I more fully understand that the ability to use links is not a replacement for the ability to reflect on or make meaningful connections as a learner, there are privacy issues with e-portfolios (such as when students want to keep the audience for their reflections limited), and the use of e-portfolios requires at least some basic technological skill.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. “Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2004, pp. 297-328.

In this article based on her address to those gathered for the 2004 Conference on College Composition and Communication, Yancey argues that because “Literacy is in the midst of a tectonic change” related to the development of new forms of non-academic writing and new technology-enabled genres (298) compositionists should respond by rethinking our roles and revising the ways we teach. Recent trends, Yancey believes, deserve attention: our students are writing in new ways through new media, and for the most part they are writing without our instruction or guidance, at the same time that fewer students are seeking English degrees. What do these trends mean for rhetoric and composition as a field? “At this moment,” writes Yancey, “we need to focus on three changes: Develop a new curriculum; revise our writing-across-the-curriculum efforts; and develop a major in composition and rhetoric” (308). Emphasizing and elaborating on the first change, Yancey explains that the existing model of composition instruction does not ask students to “consider . . . how what they are composing relates or compares to ‘real world’ genres,” to explore how to create and share what they compose in “different media, two different audiences,” to “think explicitly about what they might ‘transfer’ from one medium to the next: what moves forward, what gets left out, what gets added—and what they have learned about composing in this transfer process,” to

“consider how to transfer what they learned in one site and how that could or could not transfer to another,” or to “think about how these practices help prepare them to become members of a writing public” (311). The new model of composition she proposes challenges students to engage in all four activities. In explaining the new model of composition, Yancey discusses “three key expressions”: “Circulation of composition,” “Canons of rhetoric,” and “Deictic of technology” (311-312). According to Yancey we should understand—and help students recognize—how texts circulate as part of a “conversation [that] occurs through genres . . . with texts circulating in multiple, interrelated ways” (312), we should see “invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery” not as “discrete entities” but instead as “interrelated” (316), and we should understand how “the deictic nature of literacy” (318) makes it possible to envision new uses for developing or emerging technologies. Adapting to these changes in literacy and technology, Yancey asserts, is necessary in order for the field of rhetoric and composition to meet the needs of our students today.

Much of the discussion within the composition field about writing and teaching for transfer has been shaped by the ideas Yancey presents in “Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key.” Therefore, reading this presentation/article helps me to understand the origins of the conversation about “teaching for transfer” by composition researchers and professors. When discussing how new kinds of media create new possibilities for those composing texts, Yancey makes an important connection related to how print and digital portfolios differ. One difference, according to Yancey, involves arrangement or design: “In a print portfolio, remediated on a book, the arrangement is singular. In a digital portfolio, remediated on a gallery, the arrangements are plural” (317). Another difference is that “the students invented are quite different,” Yancey explains: “Because [with a digital portfolio] you can link externally as well as internally and because those links are material, you have more contexts you can link to, more strata you can layer, more ‘you’ to invent, more invention to represent” (317). This provocative article, which directly addresses teaching for transfer and harnessing the potential of digital portfolios, is important in understanding why we as composition teachers cannot go about our business as usual and must revise our courses.



Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "Reflection and Electronic Portfolios: Inventing the Self and Reinventing the University." *Electronic Portfolios 2.0: Emergent Research on Implementation and Impact*, edited by Darren Cambridge, Barbara Cambridge, and Kathleen Blake Yancey, Stylus, 2009, pp. 5-17.

In this chapter from *Electronic Portfolios 2.0*, Yancey notes that given the "shift from print to electronic [portfolios], the claims for [the benefits of] reflection [to students composing e-portfolios] have widened and increased" just as there has been an expansion of new digital forms reflection has taken as a result of this shift (5). She explains the results of "a multiyear study" designed to examine "the efficacy of reflection" (5). One of the study's findings was that the ways e-portfolios are structured has a profound impact on student reflection (8). Another of the study's findings was that there is data to back up the claim that reflection—as part of a carefully structured digital portfolio—correlates directly to the success of students (12). To conclude, Yancey proposes that digital portfolios with reflection purposefully integrated throughout can help educators link the official curriculum we deliver to students, the delivered curriculum individual students individually experience and interpret, and real-life curriculum that involves students' lives outside of school.

Reading Yancey's chapter leads me to believe that structured, consistent reflection is a crucial aspect of a successful e-portfolio designed to promote learning transfer. Now I see how reflection through a student's e-portfolio can help a student establish and even re-imagine her or his "identity" or sense of self. Furthermore, Yancey's findings based on the participation of two-year and four-year institutions included in the Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research offer me insight into how e-portfolios can be structured to support learning transfer, assessment, and completion of course/program/institutional learning outcomes. This statement from the end of Yancey's chapter shows why thinking carefully about the role of reflection is necessary: "reflection is itself a site of invention, a place to make new knowledge, to shape new selves, and, in doing so, to reinvent the university" (16). For these reasons perhaps reflection is the single-most important aspect of any e-portfolios students create.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak. *Writing across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing*, Utah State UP, 2014.

Since 2013, the co-authors explain, there has been renewed interest in “what has become known as the ‘transfer question’” related to “how we can help students develop writing knowledge and practices they can draw upon, use, and repurpose for new writing tasks in new settings” (1). Teaching with portfolios, thinking about content’s role in composition instruction, and helping students understand how theory informs practice are three influences that Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak explain have motivated their interest in this question about transfer. The co-authors argue “that a very specific composition course [they] designed to foster transfer in writing, what [they] call a Teaching for Transfer (TFT) course, assists students in transferring writing knowledge and practice in ways other kinds of composition courses do not” (4). After explaining how their TFT curriculum relates to others—such as Downs’/Wardle’s writing about writing (WAW) approach and Nowacek’s agents of integration approach, the co-authors explore findings based on their study of Florida State University students from three different types of writing courses: Expressivist, Media and Culture, and Teaching for Transfer. In the TFT course, they explain, “students both practice their development as writers and theorize a framework for approaching concurrent and future writing tasks” (72). Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak present six recommendations for readers interested in their TFT curriculum: “Be explicit” and “straightforward in our teaching” about the lessons we want students to learn, “Build in expert practices” that we not only describe but demonstrate, “Tap prior knowledge and concurrent knowledge” given that student learning is dynamic, “Include processes and link them to key terms and a framework” so students understand, for instance, how genres function as parts of discourse communities, “Consistently ask students to create their own frameworks using prior knowledge” as they continue to develop their own theory of writing, and “Build in metacognition” throughout the writing course (137-138). Writing instructors should teach for transfer despite its challenges, the co-authors conclude, and they believe the TFT curriculum can show teachers how to do so.

This book is particularly valuable for those interested in designing a course to help students transfer their writing knowledge and writing practice. Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak ask many compelling questions. For instance, they question the focus of first-year composition: “is it the case that all content supports students’ transfer similarly, or is some content more useful than other content in assisting students with transfer?” (3). On a related note, the co-authors ask “what difference, if any, it could make if we asked students to engage in a reiterative reflective practice, based both in their own experience and in a reflective curriculum, where the goal isn’t to document writing process or argue that program outcomes have been met, but rather to develop a theory of writing that can be used to frame writing tasks both in the [first-year composition] courses and in other areas of writing” (4). Also helpful is the authors’ chronological review of the debate about transfer among those outside and inside composition studies. They illustrate how over the last century “models of transfer have become both more contextualized and more inclusive of various factors” as studies have moved away from “a simulation-informed notion of transfer” (11). The book is instructive for those of us who want to teach for transfer because it illuminates what helped—and did not help—students in Yancey’s, Robertson’s, and Taczak’s study to apply their writing knowledge and practice. *Writing across Contexts* makes a strong case that in order to teach for transfer we have to incorporate “key rhetorical terms” to help students make sense of “writing as theory and practice,” integrate “the use of reflection as a tool for learning, thinking, and writing in the course and beyond,” and help students to develop “a theory of writing that [enables them to] create a framework of writing knowledge and practice they’ll take with them when the course is over” (57). Finally, the book offers a detailed framework that is useful for building a Teaching for Transfer (TFT) course—with additional resources in the appendices offering a description of their TFT course policies, syllabus, and major assignments.

Zinsser, William. “Writing to Learn.” *Writing to Learn*, HarperCollins, 1988, pp. 42-54.

In this chapter Zinsser identifies a point of agreement among the “professors from every corner of the curriculum” he interviewed: “Far more learning had been achieved” by students and teachers in their courses as a result of “the addition of a writing requirement”

(43). Reinforcing his experience-based realization that “thinking is the foundation of writing” (44), Zinnser calls attention to how other teachers link the ability to think and reason clearly to the ability to write well. Writing across the curriculum is important, he argues, because “the act of writing gives the teacher a window into the brain of [the] student”—especially if the writing assignment requires the student to explain how she or he arrived at an idea, belief, result, or conclusion (46). Writing allows teachers to assess what students are learning based on how they have arrived at knowledge about a subject, not just what they know about the subject. Zinnser describes how he has been forced to question his own assumptions about teaching writing: “When I first [taught writing] I assumed that a good part of the job could be accomplished by explaining in class the elements that constitute good writing. Surely if I assailed my students with my sacred principles of clarity and simplicity and brevity . . . they would go and what I had told them. No such transfer [from principle to practice] takes place. Writing teachers are lucky if 10 percent of what they said in class is remembered and applied” (47). For Zinnser, writing and learning are interdependent. “Writing is a tool that enables people in every discipline to wrestle with facts and ideas,” he explains, as writing “compels us by the repeated effort of language to go after those thoughts and to organize them and present them clearly” (49). Writing across the curriculum ultimately helps students learn how to think as well as how to show what they know and don’t know, the author suggests.

The stories Zinnser—a freelance writer, editor, and college teacher—shares from the college faculty he interviewed illustrate the value of infusing writing into courses across the curriculum. While anecdotal evidence, Zinnser’s stories (including excerpts from interviews he conducted) show that teachers who integrate writing into their courses see improvements in their own teaching and in their students’ learning. “Writing to Learn” reminds me that learning often does not happen quickly or easily; it requires trial and error, which means often failure must happen before success happens. Therefore, teachers and students should value—rather than be afraid of—failure; Zinnser argues that “In writing—and therefore in learning—[failure] is often the beginning of wisdom” (50). For me, this reality means students must have the opportunity to try and fail and succeed through low-stakes assignments before they are asked to show mastery on high-stakes assignments. Writing for transfer and teaching for transfer

require ample time, opportunity, and feedback so that students can learn, access what they are learning or have learned, and apply that learning.